

school" lasting for a few weeks at a time, there was but little attention given to the quality of the congregational singing, which, nevertheless, in its spirit and devotion, possessed a powerful charm to touch the heart and stimulate religious emotion. The minister almost invariably appeared in the black Geneva gown and bands, in conformity with the time-honoured Scottish practice, certainly a becoming and dignified adjunct to the solemnity of public worship, the disuse of which is to be regretted, especially in view of the decreasing veneration for sacred things and places, which is undermining much that is noblest in our national character.

The worshippers of that time were, as a rule, reverent and devout in appearance and manner. Parents and children walked together to the kirk, and sat together there, the younger ones under watchful eyes which quickly frowned down any symptom of inattention or levity. The unseemly whispering and tittering among young folks, which is too common in modern congregations, would never have been for a moment tolerated, and any flagrant and persistent offender would probably have been "dealt with" by the session. The times for public worship were the morning and afternoon, the Sabbath evening being supposed to be the time when parents, at leisure from the engagements of the week, could superintend the religious teaching of their families, as they were faithfully exhorted to do from the pulpit. The Sabbath school met immediately after the close of afternoon service, about four o'clock. The old-fashioned minister preferred to be his own superintendent, and officially opened the school, "giving out" the lessons for the following Sunday, according to a scheme of his own; for, of course, in those days an "International scheme of lessons" had never been heard of. Nevertheless, the children gained a very fair knowledge of Bible history, and, according to Scottish custom, committed to memory many of the most striking passages of Scripture. It was usual to prescribe from four to six verses for each lesson, in addition to the question from the Catechism and some verses of a psalm or paraphrase. A single isolated text would never have been considered an adequate lesson, and the children of those days, less burdened with secular lessons than the over-driven children of to-day, seemed to find no difficulty coming well prepared to Sunday school. It was by no means uncommon for them to learn a whole parable at once, much the most effectual way of mastering it. The children of that day may not have learned so much of all the "ologies," but they certainly knew much more of their bibles than the "smarter" generation of to-day. It was the minister's custom to make the round of all the classes, giving a word of encouragement to each teacher and getting a brief report of the progress of the pupils, after which only he would retire to get a well-earned rest. Whether or no it was due to his personal supervision over the attendance, there seemed to be no difficulty in keeping the children punctual and attentive without such adventitious aids as festivals or picnics, both the manners and the morals of the children comparing very favourably with those which have been formed under a different régime. The congregation, too, got on somehow very well without socials or entertainments of any kind, the working order and the good-fellowship of the church prospering, while the conditions of the work were much simpler than in our day of church parlours and kitchens and other expensive and complex machinery. The direct system was generally practised, and people enjoyed it, finding, no doubt, the blessing promised to those who "give, asking for nothing again."

The Communion seasons occurred only twice a year; and, indeed, the number of services connected with each celebration would have made greater frequency almost impossible. There was always—following the old Scottish custom—a "fast-day" or day of preparation, usually on the Friday previous, on which service was held morning and afternoon. Business people closed their shops or suspended their work, and came to church both times with their families, almost as if it were a Sunday. On the Saturday afternoon, there was another preliminary service, and, after a sermon, and a solemn exhortation from the minister, who generally sought assistance from his nearest brethren in the preaching of these preliminary services, the "session was constituted," and the customary "tokens of admission," were distributed to the intending communicants, as they filed in a long and solemn procession past the minister with his assembled elders. The Communion service itself was a long-protracted one, as it was the practice to keep up the Scotch custom of several "tables." The square pews, with others made square for the occasion, were used for the communicants, the tables being draped in "fair white linen cloths," thus preserving the primitive character of the Sacrament as a holy feast. As these tables could not accommodate nearly all the communicants, there were two, three, or more separate table services, as the case might be, and as these came after a morning service of nearly the usual length—

including a sermon, technically called the "action sermon"—it may be easily inferred that the whole proceedings were not concluded till three or four in the afternoon. Yet many of the people remained in church through the whole ceremonial, and, strange as it may now seem, did not find it too long! Nay, more; after the protracted service described, there was an evening service—the only occasion on which this variation occurred—and the congregation, far from seeming exhausted with its previous church-going, turned out in full force to what was always one of the most spirited and interesting services of the year. But in some very old-fashioned kirks, even this function did not terminate the series of special services, for the old "Monday sermon" of old Scottish parishes was perpetuated, and there were found people willing to come out to it. But this latter was the exception, not the rule.

The collections taken up at all these services for the poor of the congregation generally sufficed for the widows and sickly persons who were almost the sole charges on the fund. In those days there was work enough for all who could do it, and our now pressing problem of "poverty and the unemployed" were far in the future. One quaint little custom, in some places connected with the communion season, deserves commemoration. Two of the most venerable elders were accustomed to meet at the manse on the Saturday evening before the Communion, in order to prepare the bread to be used on the occasion. They usually took tea at the manse, and, as soon as this was over, the table was covered with a fresh white cloth, and the two large loaves were brought in. The elders carefully pared off all the crust except on one side, and then cut the nicely rounded loaves into a number of slices of equal size, the whole being left ready to be lifted out, while the form of the loaf remained intact. They were then neatly wrapped in fine linen napkins, and set on the silver plates used for the purpose. In serving the tables, the officiating elders handed into each pew a portion of one of these slices, which was passed on till all had helped themselves—a practice still followed in our more conservative Canadian churches. Baptisms, as a rule, were solemnized in the church, except in the depth of winter or under other exceptional circumstances. The time was usually the afternoon service, and as the vestry was generally at the entrance of the church, it was rather an ordeal for the mothers or nurses with their infants in their arms to walk up the long aisle to the foot of the pulpit, where the minister stood while performing the ceremony. Marriages, on the other hand, were then always performed in the home of the bride, or when this was not practicable, at the manse, the minister having frequently to provide the witnesses from his own household. Although, in those days, the "Euchologion" had not been heard of, each minister usually had a certain form of his own, for both marriage and baptismal service, and though it partook, of course, of the individuality of the particular minister, it was often very solemn and impressive, both the contracting parties in marriage, and the parents who consecrated their children in baptism, having their duties and responsibilities very clearly set before them. In the same way, each minister had his own set form for use at funerals and this was often most touching and impressive.

The old-fashioned minister was, like his people, sober-minded, conservative, tenacious of old ideas and ways, and perhaps somewhat slow at welcoming new ones. He was generally a devoted pastor, faithful in dealing with his people publicly and privately, and in most cases even more attentive to the poor than to the rich, often assisting the former from his own not too heavy purse, especially careful of the needs of those who had "seen better days" and therefore were sensitive about accepting needed help. His practice of paying regular pastoral visits to all his congregation in turn enabled him to keep in touch with them all, and he was, in general, the trusted and sympathizing friend and confidant of all in their troubles, of whatsoever nature. His sermons were plain and practical, and he did not lay himself out to attract by either rhetoric or oratory, recognizing his duty, as being simply to teach and exhort. Yet he had, also, a high sense of the dignity of the pulpit, of which he would have considered it an infraction to introduce into his sermons either a slovenly expression or a quotation from current slang. He trusted mainly in the faithful use of scriptural exposition, and in some cases, a short, purely expository lecture preceded the morning sermon. His prayers were as carefully considered as his sermons, abounding in scriptural expressions, which, though often recurring, never seemed to lose their fitness and solemnity. Sometimes the old-fashioned minister was something of a "Moderate," in which case he was apt to practise a little more worldly conformity than was at that time considered befitting by the more serious parishioners. But even in such cases he was, as a rule, careful of the dignity of his sacred office, earnest in his preaching, solemn and impressive

in the services of the sanctuary, just and kind, and moreover, a "gentleman," to whom a mean or doubtful expedient, or an unworthy subterfuge would have been impossible, and who believed in no religion that had not a firm foundation on the rock of righteousness. His elders were often much after his own pattern, and indeed had often been moulded by his influence. They took an active and intelligent interest in the affairs of the congregation, assisting in visiting the poor and needy, co-operated with him in all his plans, and in general the meetings of session were most pleasant and amicable consultations, the minister always making his elders feel they had a full share in all that concerned the welfare of their joint charge. The ladies of the congregation were active helpers, then, as now, aiding in the collecting of funds for special purposes, and making, with their own hands, a stock of winter garments to fit out needy children to attend church and Sunday-school.

"*Laudator temporis acti.*" It is easy to idealise old times!—perhaps some one may think. Well, the old times are gone into the eternal silence. It is well that we should not forget what we owe them, and all that they did for us. They speak to us yet by their works, which follow them. It is safe to say that a large proportion of the best elements in the life of our church to-day were formed under the régime here outlined. The Canadian Church has immensely enlarged her bounds since then; in numbers, in wealth, in power and influence, her borders are extended beyond anything the most sanguine of her founders could have dreamed. That in many things she has made progress with a progressive age there can be no manner of doubt. But have we, on the other hand, lost nothing of the faithful, unostentatious perseverance in well doing—the social and industrial uprightness, the quiet self-devotion to duty, the simplicity of life, the genuine reality and whole-heartedness, which in the main, characterized the old-fashioned church and the old-fashioned minister?

Kingston.

### Resurrection Man's Hope.

BY G. C. WYLIE.

The summer bird has crossed the main,  
For autumn's winds are chilling fast.  
And wailing is the north wind's blast  
Across the cold, gray, grassless plain.

Th' stately flower has bent its head  
To worship at another shrine.  
For summer's god has poured the wine,  
And quiet rests upon his bed.

All nature weeps and wails aloud.  
For leaf and blade have passed away  
To mingle with the mouldering clay,  
And calmly wait their snowy shroud.

As thus I sit alone and dream,  
"Of what is now and what hath been,"  
That friend of yore, that friend unseen,  
Seems lost to me beyond the stream.

Which flows with deep and sullen roar  
Far out into the dark, cold night,  
Where gleams no clear and beacon light,  
But deadly breakers sweep the shore.

But summer birds again I'll see.  
When skies are clear and frosts no more,  
The verdant south will prove a door  
Through which will come the bloom and bee.

O Christ! what wondrous thought is this!  
That all should live again in Thee,  
From shade and death to be set free,  
And none of all God's loved ones miss.

So I can trust my friend to greet;  
Thus hopes anew my aching heart,  
For though for years we've been apart,  
God hath ordained our paths to meet.

Yes, Christ is good and God is love,  
The Spirit is a mighty power,  
And when we pass through death's dark hour  
In faith we'll meet with those above.

Brampton, November 21st, 1896.

### Remembrances.

There is no home like the home of our infancy; no remembrances like those of our youth, the old trees whose topmost boughs we have climbed, the hedge containing that prize, a bird's nest, the fairy tale we heard by the fireside, are things of deep and serious interest in maturity. The heart, crushed or hardened by its intercourse with the world, turns with affectionate delight to its early dreams. How I pity those whose childhood has been unhappy! To them one of the sweetest springs of feeling has been utterly denied, the most green and beautiful part of life laid waste. But to those whose spring has been what spring should ever be—fresh, buoyant, and glad, whose cup has not been poisoned at the first draught—how delicious is recollection! they truly know the pleasures of memory.—GEORGE ELIOT.