

Our Contributors.

GETTING HOLD OF THE PEOPLE BY THE PEOPLE.

BY KNOXONIAN.

A Governor General is not expected to say anything fresh or particularly bright in reply to the numerous addresses with which he is bombarded. The typical address assures his Excellency in many words that we Canadians are a loyal people, and his Excellency replies in substance that he is glad to hear it. Sometimes, however, an address deviates a little from the old line, and in such cases the Governor, or perhaps his secretary, gets a chance to put something special in his reply. The Toronto Conference addressed Lord Stanley the other day, and the Vice-regal reply shows that our Governor understands Methodism. Among other things his Excellency said:

Gentlemen, I well know that this is one of the special merits of your Church, that they endeavour to get hold of the people by the people.

That is the right plan. If the people outside of the Church are ever to be got hold of, the people inside must take hold. The minister and half a dozen elders can never do the work. Other things being nearly equal, the Church that tries to get hold of the people by the people will be the most successful. A congregation in which the work of bringing in the people is left to the minister and a few officials has no earthly chance alongside of one in which the people inside are constantly engaged in bringing in, or trying to bring in, outsiders to hear the Gospel. The effort to bring others in would do the Church an immense amount of good, even though unsuccessful. Trying to rub into life a man nearly frozen to death warms the man who rubs as well as the man who is rubbed.

But why should getting hold of the people by the people be a special merit of Methodism? Perhaps his Excellency had the Methodists of England in his eye when he wrote this reply. Possibly he was thinking of the way English Methodists work as compared with the members of his own Church. Be that as it may, there is no reason why Methodist people should have a monopoly of this special merit. We don't believe they have in Canada, but if they have, the fault lies with the other Churches. The Methodists don't do too much—the others do too little. The people in all Churches should try to get hold of the people outside. A Church that ceases to be aggressive will soon cease to be progressive. Not to go forward is to go back. To hold your own you must do more than hold your own. The object for which a Church exists is to bring in the people.

Dr. Willis used to say that it was impossible to estimate how little exertion was needed merely to keep a good Presbyterian congregation together. The Principal never appeared to better advantage than when he took off his spectacles during his lectures, and, in a few pungent extemporaneous sentences, urged his students to carry the war into the enemy's ranks. Did anybody ever hear him admit that to Methodism belonged the special merit of bringing in the people? He always held, and very properly held, that when Presbyterianism got fair play it could bring in the people as fast as, and keep them in longer than, any other system. Principal Willis did not belong to the Mollusk school, who go down on their marrowbones and say, "How much better these other denominations can work than we can?"

There never can be much done in the way of evangelizing the world until the people try to get hold of the people. A congregation of three hundred members should have 300 workers for Christ, and if the 300 were all working it would not take them long to bring in many more. The next best thing to having all work would be to allow ministers and office-bearers more time to work among outsiders? How much time does the pastor of a large congregation get to work among outsiders? It is notorious that his time is chiefly taken up in looking after people who should be working themselves. Pastoral visitation is not making war against the world. It is simply an effort to help people who should in many cases be trying to help others. Hundreds of men are in every community, who never darken a church door, who so far as their attention to personal religion is concerned, might as well be in Central Africa, but the ministers

are so much engaged in making calls upon Christian people that they positively have neither time nor strength to attack what is called "the world." If all the Church members who demand pastoral visitation every six or twelve months would themselves attack "the world" in some way or another, the world would be greatly benefited and the Church too.

The names by which Christians are known show that the people should try to get hold of the people.

Believers are God's servants. What is a servant? A servant is a person who works. A servant is not a visitor, or a boarder, or a gentleman at large. The very name servant suggests work.

Believers are soldiers. The Church is God's army. The whole army should fight. Of what use is an army if none but the officers fight. Could one or two officers have taken Sebastopol? Could Wellington and Blucher and two or three other officers have won Waterloo?

Believers are God's sons. A son who does nothing to advance the interests of the family is a poor kind of youth. There is just one worse kind, and that is the son who tries to injure the family.

At conferences, conventions and similar gatherings the question always comes up: How can careless, godless men outside the Churches be brought in. The correct answer probably is, They will be brought in when the tone of piety is so high within the Churches that the members will go out and bring them in.

TWO PICTURES.

A LETTER FROM BROOKLYN.

All children should have some joyous land-marks in each year by which time is made shorter. "All work and no play" is a good, suggestive phrase, and one which should be thought of and acted upon occasionally throughout the year. What older Canadian boy does not remember about the 24th of May? And younger boys, have similar associations with Dominion Day. Then there are the autumn shows and different kinds of school picnics. How often we have gone fishing to that very place, and it seemed dull, quiet, lonely, hungry and even dreary enough, but when the Sunday school picnic was held there, how different! When we were very young the swings and fine things to eat were all we cared for, but when we became older the freedom from school or work, and the pretty girls became the attractions, and so we journeyed up through life, but go where and as we please, we still love to look back on the happy picnic days of youth and childhood as the most joyous of life.

Different localities and people have different kinds of enjoyment. Children who dwell in the country are comparatively full and "have need of nothing," especially respecting healthful surroundings, country scenes, or good food, but with city children, any one of these beneficial conditions is sure to be lacking, and with the poorer children, all may be necessary. The enjoyment of a grand picnic day may be an occasional and uncertain thing, but in the great city of Brooklyn, which is just across the East River from the city of New York, the case is different respecting one day of each year, and this is Anniversary Day, which is generally held about the 20th of May.

Brooklyn is called the "City of Churches," and sometimes the "city of boarding houses." It can lay claim to either. In it Beecher preached during more than forty years. Dr. Talmage and Dr. Storrs preach there now. Dr. Moment, from Orono, Ontario, and the Rev. Robert Montgomery, Baptist, formerly from Ayr, Ontario, are both in Brooklyn now. The great day for Sabbath school children each year in Brooklyn is Anniversary Day, because all the Protestant evangelical denominations join in one grand parade, and a large number go to Prospect Park. This delightful resort lies to the south of Brooklyn City and comprises some hundreds of acres of land, part is covered with forest, and part is kept as meadows and lawns.

The trees are mostly majestic chestnuts, birch, white and red oak, and a few tulip trees. Much of the forest is in its primeval grandeur, having been parts of Flatbush farms previously to being incorporated into Prospect Park some years ago. Beginning at the city entrance, which is at the north-east corner there is a series of beautiful meadows extending to the south-west side, a distance of nearly a mile. A short

distance from the north-east end one can stand and get an excellent view throughout the whole length of this beautiful valley. Hills rise on both sides, and half way up from their tops the forest trees begin.

For Anniversary Day preparations had been made for about a dozen schools by erecting tents, benches, enclosing with ropes, etc. A large number of children and their teachers and other friends have come with them, so let us take a good view of this happy scene. When the day is bright and warm nearly all the scholars are dressed in white, and with music being played, and banners flying, the sight is one very suggestive of the Prince of Peace.

The trees are nearly all out in leaf. The rarer kinds such as mock magnolias have bloomed and the rhododendrons are just out. The horse chestnuts are blooming, the leaves of the white oaks are "larger than a squirrel's foot," and the dogwood trees are beginning to shed their blossoms, but they are white yet, and being so numerous, they have a beautiful effect all along the two sides of the valley. The grass is well cut, both men and horses being continually employed with lawn mowers, so that with the bright, green, velvety carpet beneath the feet, the green foliage of the trees, fresh with its spring beauty, the blooming shrubs, and the fresh air to inspire the children, one could not get any circumstances more suggestive of real happiness.

Add to all this the fact that thousands of these children are poor, and dwell in tenements where they cannot, from week's end to week's end, get their feet on anything but pavement and cobble-stones, and we can see an additional element in the cause of delight among these poor things. When will all the world, in peace and plenty for sinful and suffering humanity, be like this glad scene? Where we are sitting is the hill upon which some city society has erected a granite pedestal on which is the bronze bust of Howard Payne, the author of "Home, Sweet Home." Behind us is a beautiful rustic cottage where light delicious refreshments can be had. The tables are set amongst bowers overgrown with wisteria and other beautiful vines, and around a number of peacocks and other domestic fowls wander and solicit an occasional crumb.

WAR, CRUEL WAR.

Let us turn back in memory about one hundred years and imagine ourselves on this same hill side. The British, hearing that the American Army, under command of Washington and other generals, had taken up a strong position on the western end of Long Island, decided to meet them. Most of the British forces landed at Fort Hamilton, about six miles west, and marched east to the level plain around Flatbush. One wing of the royalists swung around to the east and out flanked the Americans. The beautiful valley before us was the position of the main force of the Americans. All along to our right and left extends a range of hills which are both steeper and deeper towards the south, or the side on which the British were, than on the north towards the Americans, thus forming an excellent rampart for the home forces. A little to the east of where we are sitting there is an opening in the hill where the old Flatbush turn-pike road used to be. This, during the battle, became the scene of fearful fighting and was ultimately driven clear by the royalists who, having gained the upper ground, soon drove the home forces back, and finally gained the battle. Ever after this the opening in the hill was called "The Battle Pass," and a stone has been placed in the bank bearing an inscription commemorative of the event.

As we came up the way of the "Battle Pass" to-day, deer were pasturing peacefully where the main force of the British Army advanced from toward the "Battle Pass," and as we walk along we are surrounded and shaded by beautiful trees and shrubs in bloom, the songs of the birds were making melody all around. How different from the experience of the surviving soldier who saw only clouds of powder smoke, and heard amid the din of the carnage of war the groans of the dying, and saw around the bleeding and mangled dead. To-day all is peaceful, and doubtless not one in every hundred of those who enjoyed the park, knew anything of the dreadful scenes which had once been enacted on this very ground. Only once do we know of bloody war scenes having been acted on these hills and valleys, dozens of times have these little soldiers of the Prince of Peace enjoyed one day of Christian happiness here.

We believe, too, that thousands who have, as Sabbath school children, enjoyed Anniversary Day here, have fallen in battle, because this same city, Brooklyn, sent many thousands of her purest and noblest sons to the late Civil War, in many instances our congregation would raise a company. But all this is long past and, let us hope, never to return. To make this sure let every one who is a Christian act becoming the name and example of the Great Leader who was called the Prince of Peace, and when He came He quite fulfilled the Scripture concerning His wonderful name. Great conquerors have found it difficult to be mighty men, but the most difficult task of all is to conquer in the manner in which Christ did.