

would be an item of great interest at a meeting of our Astronomical Society at Toronto. Mr. Lofthouse refers to the brilliant glow of a "grand aurora" seen last February during his momentous trip, as being equal to the light of ten moons.

A. G. SAVIGNY.

Sidesmen.

SIR.—In what I will call your "Dictionary of Church Terms," I think in your issue of the 12th inst., p. 707, *re* Sidesmen, you have fallen into two errors. You say, alluding no doubt to the original institution of the office, if any one can tell when that was: "He was a person whose duty it was to assist the churchwardens in laying ecclesiastical offences before the bishop at Synods or visitation. In the present day, sidesmen are persons chosen by the churchwardens, and deputed by them," &c., &c. In this view you are supported by Cutts, see Dictionary of the Church, 2nd ed., p. 562, art. Sidesmen. But to me this appears somewhat inconsistent with what he says, *ibid*, p. 165, art. Churchwardens, which is, he says: "An office so ancient that we have no account of its origin. Their primary office probably was to take care of the church and its goods for the parishioners. . . . In course of time, the duties of 'Synodsmen' or 'questmen' were added to their office," &c., &c. First, as to office and status of the Synodsmen, originally, I may say this question was discussed by both clergymen and laymen in the Diocese of Manchester through the columns of the leading daily papers published in Manchester. I cannot, after the lapse of some twelve years, give even an outline of the arguments put forth in the friendly controversy, which arose out of some remarks made by one who, because he was not elected warden, refused to be nominated for election for a sidesman, saying, "The sidesman's was a mere modern office of little use and less dignity." The gist of the argument in favour of the office of Synodsmen was much to this effect—that, however, ancient and honourable the duties of the Churchwarden may be, and as Mr. Cutts says they are, and which nobody will deny, the office and duties of the Synodsmen was quite as, or more ancient, quite as important, and equally as honourable as his, in some respects, co-worker, Mr. Churchwarden. That it was not the business of the Synodsmen to assist the churchwardens to prepare a report to the bishop in the Synodal assembly, where the warden, presumably, had no *locus standi*, but that it was his special duty to prepare and present his own report as a member of the Synod, as his name implies; his report bearing upon the conduct and character, ecclesiastical matters, the proper discharge or neglect of parochial duties, including those of the churchwardens, as well as the moral and religious state of the parish. Second, as to the present mode of appointment. Of the original mode I have no evidence. I may say that during nearly 50 years of experience in different parts of and parishes in England, I have never before heard different as his duties undoubtedly are to what they were, that sidesmen of the present day are the mere appointees of the churchwardens. I never heard of but one case, and that in a Manchester parish, when the reins were in very feeble hands, where the wardens claimed the right to appoint sidesmen. Indeed it was out of the assumed right of these particular wardens, in spite of protest from the "vestry" lawfully convened and assembled, that the newspaper controversy arose, as well as to the seniority of the rector's warden over his vestry-elected colleague. This latter point was finally settled by Diocesan Chancellor Christy, whose decision was that they were co-equal in every respect as churchwardens. As in the election of wardens, unless the incumbent waived his right, as many do in the mother Church, he nominates half the number, the parishioners in vestry assembled elect the other half, the number required varying from two to sixteen, the highest number I was ever associated with. I am, so far, writing of the *modus operandi* of the mother Church. There may, perchance, be some difference in Canada, and other daughter Churches, though in the two parishes in this city, with which I am best acquainted, *viz.*, St. Luke's and St. Cyprian, the mode of "nominating" and "electing," both classes of officials is, I am pretty sure, the same as in England. To very slightly alter Shakespeare, permit me to say, "I am" not "Sir Oracle," so that when I open my mouth no dog must bark. On the contrary, I have stated nothing *ex-cathedra* as to the original office and functions of the Synodsmen, though I think I am not far astray. Nor do I wish in any manner or degree to detract from the honour and dignity of Mr. Churchwarden, when I assert, *ex-cathedra*, so far as the mother Church is concerned, any attempt on the part of the wardens to appoint sidesmen would be treated as *ultra vires*, were any protests made against it, like any other member of the vestry. The wardens elect both have the right to propose any parishioner they choose for election by the vestry, as a sides-

man. Rectors, vicars, etc., simply nominate their wardens and sidesmen. Both classes of officials attend or should attend the archdeacon's visitation, and sign the rolls before entering or re-entering upon their duties.

GEORGE WARD.

Synodical Organization for Algoma.

SIR.—As I was the only delegate from the Diocese of Algoma who in the last session of the Provincial Synod argued and voted for concurrence in the message from the House of Bishops, strongly recommending the granting to the Diocese of Algoma the power of Synodical organization, and as the reports of the arguments as used by me, in favour of concurrence in the message, have received, in my opinion, but scant justice at the hands of the press, I crave your indulgence in asking for space in your widely circulated columns to repeat at greater length my arguments in favour of Synodical organization being granted to the Diocese of Algoma. In one particular I have been enlightened during the session just concluded. No half measure is possible. It means Synodical organization or nothing. We must assume the privileges and responsibilities of perfect Synodical organization, or remain as we are. The law will recognize no partial assumption of privileges or partial repudiation of responsibilities; *i.e.*, with Synodical organization we must assume and receive the right of electing first, our bishop, secondly, our representatives to the Provincial and General Synods, in proportion to the number of our clergy, as in the other dioceses. We could not if we would, gratify our fellow dioceses by abstaining from the exercise of these prerogatives conferred upon us by the Church Temporalities Act. We would, therefore, it is argued, have to climb the pyramid and boldly take the first gigantic stride as best we can. In doing this, it is said, we cut ourselves adrift from the sympathy and assistance of the outside world, and also part company with our familiar friends in whom we trusted and took sweet counsel together in the House of God; and that even they, jealously safeguarding the dignity, wisdom and power of the Synods which they represent, would therefore regard as an unpardonable intrusion the advent, as friends, in council of their benighted brethren in Christ, the missionary clergy and laity of the Church in Algoma. Surely it were a grievous slur upon the charity of the Church in Canada to entertain such a thought for a moment. We would be cordially welcome, and no doubt the presence and counsel of more missionary clergy direct from the scene of their labours, would be a powerful incentive to increased missionary activity; certainly it would not in the case of Algoma engender party spirit, for that we have so far been most happily ignorant. No, I have too high an estimate of the dignity and fairness of the Synods both General and Provincial, in which I have had the privilege of representing Algoma, to suppose that the increase in our representation proportionate to our numerical strength, would meet with an opposing voice or vote. But it has been said, if we take this step, we shall alienate the sympathy and forfeit the assistance of the Church at large, both here and in England. I reply, surely not. As a missionary diocese we have now to face the fact that year by year, the grant of the English Societies, who have assisted us so well, so nobly and so long, are to be withdrawn, until at the expiration of ten years we shall have to look elsewhere for help. Diocesan organization will not affect this issue, and surely private and personal appeals to individuals and co-operative societies may be well content to rest and justify their claims upon the merits of the case. No reasonable man would turn a deaf ear to the piteous cry of Algoma simply because she was an organized body. And here I am constrained to urge yet more cogent reasons for rightly constituted self-government, based upon long tried and successful principles. In asking for Synodical organization, Algoma (saving the privilege of electing representatives) asks for no more power than she has all along enjoyed. Algoma is already a corporation. She possesses the same privileges and exercises the same powers as are entrusted to Montreal or Toronto. Algoma can acquire and dispose of property, mortgage her buildings, invest her funds, or transact any business that any other diocese is legally entitled to do, with this important distinction that the exercise of all these powers is vested entirely in the personality of the bishop, who is the corporation sole. Now, I ask, is this right? Is it profitable that our beloved bishop should be forced into a position in which he must of necessity and continuously serve tables? I think a certain chapter in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles might be read for the enlightenment of those who think so. I say it is not fair to the bishop, that, from the signing of a cheque for his own salary, to the granting of a deed of sale of a church site, the office and personality of the bishop should be constantly invaded and invoked. Again, as I urged on the floor of the Provincial Synod, not only is the

bishop decidedly out of his proper sphere of action, but the laity, who are able and willing intelligently to assume their share in the management and responsibility of the funds and temporalities of the Church, are virtually ignored. Their advice, counsel and active assistance are lost, consequently their sympathies are estranged and our mutual associations and counsels, so prolific in good, are entirely wanting. It is true, the laity are elected to, and are warmly welcomed in our councils as at present constituted, but their inadequate attendance demonstrates the fact that they seek and expect a controlling voice and vote in the temporalities of the diocese as their legitimate sphere of action. It only remains for me to explain my isolated voice and vote in favour of the message from the Upper House. It is an admitted fact that all the delegates, with others of our council, have been engaged in drafting a constitution and canons for the future Diocese of Algoma, should our petition for that consummation be granted. We came down with this constitution in our hand, ready, if we deemed it expedient, to present it to the Provincial Synod. If my colleagues will not confirm my statement in this latter respect, I would only insist upon the fact, which is evident, *i.e.*, that we fully contemplated the assumption of Synodical organization as soon as practicable. All our councils trended this way. It was the subject of public and private expectation and desire on the part of all Algoma. I therefore take the vote of non-concurrence in the message from the Upper House to mean that if Synodical organization was desirable it was inopportune and premature, and this for the following reasons: First, the bishop-elect has not as yet time or opportunity from personal observation to weigh the reasons for and against the motion of the bishops. Secondly, we, as a delegation from our triennial council, had not referred our work (namely, constitution and canons) back to the same body. Thirdly, we were not financially in a position to assume independent Synodical functions. I have stated these objections in, as it appears to me, their order of merit, and will endeavour to answer them. First: our bishop not yet in a position to judge of the expediency of concurrence or otherwise. This to me was the only argument worthy of mention. I fully appreciate the deference due to him. But I reply, concurrence in the message from the Upper House by no means required or implied hasty or precipitate action upon our part. We were only asked to assume the advisability of that for which we have been contending and preparing ourselves for years past, unitedly and consistently. The influence and judgment of the bishop-elect might, after due observation, have differed from that of his clergy and laity. In that case there would have been ample time for him to exercise his judgment, and, if he thought fit, veto our expressed desire. The same reason will apply to the implied necessity of referring back to our Triennial Council the report of our work before committing it to the principle of Synodical organization. It would still have remained with the bishop-elect and his council to ratify or annul the decision which the delegates to the Provincial Synod had arrived at in reference to the desirability of independent diocesan organization. As it is, the impression left on the mind of the House of Bishops, and the Lower House, through the non-concurrence of the delegates who gave the adverse vote, will be that Synodical organization is neither opportune, practical, nor expedient. One word more. Are the delegates from Algoma who voted "nay" to the bishop's message on the ground that our financial position does not warrant the risk incurred, so sanguine of our increased financial prosperity that we will be prepared in five, ten or fifteen years to assume that position on a more hopeful financial basis? I know they are not, and if not, why wait for the impossible? Why urge as a reason a Utopia which can have no existence in our day? Why waste time and money in preparing for the impossible?

JAMES BOYDELL,

Delegate to late Provincial Synod.

Bracebridge.

BRIEF MENTION.

The Rev. W. J. Eccleston has resigned the mission of Marksville, in Algoma.

The greatest length of England (and Scotland, north and south, is about 608 miles.

In the waters off the coast of Sardinia there is found a pearl-bearing oyster, from which have been taken pink, red, white and black pearls.

Rev. A. W. S. Garden has resigned the parish of Naticooke, Diocese of Niagara.

The Duke of Marlborough lived 72 years. His active military career covered a period of twenty years.

In France, when a railroad train is more than ten minutes late, the company is fined.