

## Our Contributors.

### MORE EVICTIONS ON LORD ALCO HOL'S ESTATE.

BY KNOXONIAN.

Mr. and Mrs. Pioneer sailed from the Old Country a few days after their marriage. They were nearly three months in crossing the Atlantic. When they landed at Quebec, their worldly goods were all in a large wooden trunk. Pioneer had a few sovereigns in his pocket, but barely enough to pay their way up the St. Lawrence. After a most tedious journey, they landed at a small place on the northern shore of Lake Ontario. Here, Pioneer and a few other emigrants hired a couple of waggons, and drove nearly a hundred miles into the interior. Having arrived at a township that they had frequently heard about, they at once took up land, and began building shanties for their families. In those early days neighbours were very kind to each other, and helped each other in many ways. They depended on each other for many things; they had to borrow and lend a great deal, and the social feeling in any neighbourhood was much better than it has ever been since the neighbours stopped cutting each other's hair, and their wives and daughters began wearing \$20 bonnets.

The first evening that Mr. and Mrs. Pioneer sat by a blazing fire in their own shanty, they had a little touch of that honest pride which every Britisher feels when he meditates on that part of the British constitution which says: An Englishman's house is his castle. They knew very well that their new home in the woods was humble enough. Pioneer and one or two neighbours had "lumped" the work of the carpenter, painter, plumber, plasterer and half a dozen other mechanics, and had done it all with an axe. Mrs. Pioneer had been brought up in a much better home than her new one; but this home was her own, and humble as it was, she, like a true woman, liked it because it was her own. If a young wife thinks more of a flower, or a squash, or a hill of potatoes, growing in the garden attached to her first home than she does of any hundred acres in the country, the man who has got her should thank heaven every day. He has got a good wife. This is one of the infallible signs of a good woman.

In Pioneer's neighbourhood there were many gatherings called "Bees" and "Raisins." Every old settler knows what these gatherings were. We have neither time nor space to explain to those who don't know. Just ask any one who came to any part of Ontario forty or fifty years ago, and he will tell you. At all these gatherings there was whiskey. There was an unwritten law in the neighbourhood that the people would not gather to help any man who refused to give grog. One of the neighbours was elected grog-boss, and on him devolved the onerous duty of passing round the liquid. Generally it was stuff that was poisonous enough to kill at forty rods.

Pioneer was present at all these gatherings, and he always took his grog. He did not care much for it at first, but he was a generous, social fellow, and never took a back seat when there was any fun or excitement going on. He drank at first for companionship, and after a time, when he was a little worn out with the labour of clearing up his land, he began to drink more, because he thought it gave him strength and helped him in his hard work. Wherever he went the liquor was before him. It was used when the youngsters came into the world, when the old people went out, and at all points between. It fairly flowed at marriages. A veteran pastor of the early days was once told by the happy man, at the conclusion of the ceremony, that the fee was not forthcoming because he had had to pay out all his money for whiskey!

Far be it from this contributor to say a disparaging word about the old settlers. Taken as a whole, they were as noble, generous, manly and enterprising a race of men as ever colonized any country. It is unfair to judge them by the standards that obtain in our days in regard to the use of liquor. If some of them drank more than the average man drinks at present, they had many noble qualities which went a long way as an offset to the drinking qualities that unfortunately many who talk loudly enough about drinking are entirely destitute of. It would be difficult to show that the average of morality is higher in Ontario now than it was forty or fifty years ago. There may be less drinking and less fighting; but is

there not more dishonesty, more perjury, more Sabbath breaking, more disrespect for parental and other authority, more disrespect for the Bible and sacred things? The character of a people is well shown by the kind of men they put in places of honour. Within the last year, the second or third generation of Canadians have put men in the highest places that their grandfathers would have carried out of the country on a fence rail.

But to return to our friend Pioneer. It soon became painfully evident to his friends, and more particularly to his wife, that Pioneer was just losing self-control. His will power was going, and he did not know it. For many years he prospered on his farm, but of late his affairs were fast becoming entangled. His financial embarrassment made him drink all the more heavily. He drank to drown his sorrow. He had to drive his grain forty or fifty miles to market. In those days there was a tavern at almost every cross roads. The temptation was too strong for poor Pioneer, and many a time he had to be taken home. His creditors began to push him, and a mortgage was put on the farm. Poor Mrs. Pioneer signed away her home with a trembling hand and a heavy heart; but what could she do? A few more years revealed the awful fact that some of the boys were following in their father's footsteps. A second mortgage was put on the farm.

A year or two afterward it was sold. Pioneer drank harder than ever. Some of the boys went to ruin along with their father. The family eventually broke up.

Reader, is this a fancy sketch? Is there a township in Ontario, in which evictions of this kind have not taken place?

### CAUSES OF THE EVILS.

MR. EDITOR,—Is it not considered a display of bad taste to interrupt a speaker (or writer) before he has done with his subject? "Conveners," I think, would have acted more wisely had he retained his letter till those promised by me were before him. Then likely his letter would have been torn up, and thrown into his waste basket. I yield first place to no minister of our Church in sympathy with, and pity for, our aggrieved probationers, whilst at the same time I am bound to call a spade a spade. I prefer this physician, who, with tender heart, yet firm hand, probes the sore to the bottom, and heals it from the root, rather than that physician who, indifferently, applies a little ointment and heals it on the surface. I think, sir, there has been too much surface-doctoring. The defects of the working of any scheme cannot be discovered until it has been put into full operation. I think I have made myself acquainted with the causes of the evils connected with the working of Mr. Laidlaw's Distribution Scheme. The scheme itself is, I believe, a good one; I object to the way in which it is worked. I will now give you the causes. As my first cause and text, I will take the old Scotch proverb: "Too many cooks spoil the broth." You would not hesitate, Mr. Editor, to express your decided disapproval of that pot of broth that had been watched by the eyes and stirred by the hands of a dozen cooks. If the manipulation of a pot of broth by a dozen cooks was to improve rather than to spoil, why is it we see all over the world one cook for one pot? And common sense and reason and experience and human nature say: Only one cook for one pot, and then you will have a good potful of broth. And so I say, Let there be one Distribution Committee for one scheme. If the present scheme is to be a success, put the whole power of supply into the hands of one committee—the present Distribution Committee. Let every minister, with or without charge, licentiate or student, apply to, and find work in, vacancies through this committee. I have nothing to say of those Conveners, Moderators, elders, members who favour this minister and that student for a hearing in vacancies. But I most emphatically say, Dismiss all these cooks from the pot, and let the one skilled cook, the Assembly's Distribution Committee, entirely control the scheme. I could give you many instances of the abuse of this power by Moderators, elders and members of vacant charges, to the serious injury of ministers without charge. Ministers whose families were provided for by the Sabbath's work were compelled to stay at home, while ministers with a \$1,000 salary were filling vacant pulpits. But I forbear. Let me ask you one question, Mr. Editor: Why is it that so

many of our ministers without charge have only eight Sabbaths out of the thirteen of this quarter? These eight Sabbaths have to provide for their families! and yet a large number of our vacant charges have not one day's appointment from the Distribution Committee! One has to get behind the scenes to be able to answer that question. Let the power of making appointments to vacancies rest entirely in the hands of the Distribution Committee, and the existing evils will in a great measure cease. Not altogether, for there are one or two more causes which require attention. The second cause I will mention is that of unlimited time to vacancies. This may not seem at the first glance to have anything of evil attached to it, but examine it closely. The longer a charge is vacant the greater is the number of candidates. As the number increases, so the likes and dislikes of the hearers, so the difficulty, and so greater grows the impossibility of arriving at an unanimous decision. I have been told by members of a two-years-standing vacancy that the congregation was more unanimous after six months than at the end of two years. I know congregations now that are heartily tired of being without a pastor, and would be greatly rejoiced if the Church could bring about a settlement. This unlimited time must be limited, for the sake of our Church, congregations and ministers. Another cause of the evils connected with the working of the Distribution Scheme is the supreme indifference with which many of our Presbyteries regard decisions emanating from the highest court of our Church. Take, for example, the appointment of ministers without charge to vacancies within their bounds. "Vacancies—supplied by students;" "Vacancies—no supply required from committee;" "Vacancies—but no report; i.e., get our own supply." How is it possible, Mr. Editor, for this or any other scheme to work successfully, as long as Presbyteries are allowed to do pretty much as they please? Does it not seem to you as if it were a matter of supreme indifference to many of our Presbyteries what treatment our probationers received, how they were to live, and what was to become of their families? That many of our ministers are given appointments for only thirty-two Sabbaths; that they are required to provide for their families, and pay railway expenses out of ten times thirty-two, and dress themselves in a becoming manner, gives them no concern. Our elders and members clamour for students and ministers in charge, and we must obey or incur their resentment. And so they wink at the grievances and evils connected with this department of the Church's work, fold their arms and say to their souls, "Peace, peace." The Conveners and city ministers with whom I have talked on the subject say most decidedly that something will have to be done. If ministers and members would act honestly, uprightly and impartially, and for the welfare and prosperity of the Church, it seems to me that there would be no difficulty.

ALIQUORUM.

### EVANGELISTIC WORK IN WINNIPEG.

Rev. W. Meikle, of New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, has just concluded in Winnipeg a remarkably successful series of evangelistic meetings, extending over six weeks. He came at the request of the Presbyterian ministers, Messrs. Pitblado and Gordon, and for the first ten days the services were held afternoon and evening in Knox Church. The interest developed so rapidly that the Methodist and Baptist brethren were speedily drawn in, and the work at once assumed a union character. From 1,500 to 2,000 people attended every evening, and frequently many were unable to gain admission. Every Sabbath afternoon services were held in the opera-house "for men only." This large building was always crowded with men, many of whom had seldom seen the inside of a church. They were interested in the singing of the simple Gospel hymns, and deeply moved by the evangelist's stirring appeals and practical, pointed exposition of the Word. His afternoon Bible readings were largely attended, and thoroughly appreciated by Christians of all denominations. Indeed, the influence of the whole movement on professing Christians is quite as marked as among the irreligious. Believers have been mightily quickened, and the Churches here will from this time assume a more aggressive attitude. The general feeling is that the pulpit must keep more closely by the Word, and believers in every walk deal more pointedly