

Our Contributors.

SOME UNREASONABLE EXPECTATIONS.

BY KNOXONIAN.

Ministers sometimes complain that their congregations are unreasonable. They expect their pastor to be what no man can be and do what no man can do. The real fact is that *some* congregations, and perhaps a few people in all congregations, are unreasonable. The great majority of Presbyterian people are more than reasonable—they are kind, generous and helpful.

But still it must be admitted that sometimes very unreasonable, yes, impossible, things are expected from ministers.

Here is a church at some crossroads, or in some small village, that seats 400 people. There are not 200 healthy Presbyterians within a radius of ten miles, and yet the pastor of that church is expected to keep it full every Sabbath. When all his own people are there it is not more than half full, and in some way or another he is expected to have every seat occupied. That does not strike one as a reasonable expectation.

Here is a congregation deeply in debt. A minister supposed to be popular is called and settled. Disguise the matter as you may, use all the pious phrases at the induction that you please about getting a minister from the Lord to care for the souls of the people, the plain, hard, bottom fact is that the people have called that man mainly to pay off the church debt. The debt is not paid as soon as expected. The minister is voted a failure. He must go. Now that is scarcely a reasonable thing to do. In less advanced times it was generally supposed that the people paid their own debts. If a congregation recklessly, or even judiciously, goes into debt it seems but reasonable that they should pay their own bills.

Very unreasonable things crop out in regard to pastoral visitation. Some rural congregations are scattered over the greater part of a township. The families most distant from each other are perhaps twenty miles apart, and the others are scattered between them. When the pastor visits them he is expected to "put in his horse and spend the day." Anything less than a day is considered no visit. Doing pastoral work in that way, along with funerals, sick visits, Presbytery work and other duties, take up every waking hour of the year, and yet the man is expected to prepare as good sermons as a minister who studies six or eight hours every day. That is scarcely reasonable. The people mean it for kindness, but it is a species of kindness that has killed many a minister—intellectually.

Perhaps the most unreasonable thing people ever do is blame a minister for not knowing that there is sickness in their homes, though no one tells him. They don't tell him nor tell anybody else to tell him. They send for the doctor. Nobody ever takes for granted that the doctor knows they are ill without being told, though he has a lively financial interest in the matter. They send for him promptly. But they quietly assume that the minister should know without being told. When asked why they did not send word, the reply nearly always is: "We thought you would have heard it. Many a faithful pastor has been cruelly wronged for not hearing that some parishioner was sick when nobody told him. To expect a pastor to know every case of sickness in a large congregation without being told is a sweetly reasonable expectation. Is it not?"

Some people are rather unreasonable in the matter of recognition on the street or elsewhere. They look at the pastor twice every Sabbath for years. His face, such as it is, becomes photographed on their minds. They expect him to recognize them as readily as they recognize him. They conveniently forget that while they were looking at one person he was looking at several hundred and conducting the service besides. To expect a man to recognize a thousand faces as easily as one is scarcely reasonable.

There is no use in saying anything to those people who blame a minister for not bringing their careless friends to church when said friends have fully made up their minds that they will not go. Nor is there any use in discussing with people who blame ministers because their ungodly relatives are not converted. There are such people, but they are beyond the pale of reason.

These and many other unreasonable things are ex-

pected from ministers by some people. Are ministers the only men from whom unreasonable things are expected? Nay, verily.

Here is a doctor whose patient expects him to put in a new liver. The old one goes on strike with painful frequency. It is almost useless. The patient says he must have something done. He does not say in so many words that he wants a new organ put in, but that is practically what his demands amount to. The doctor cannot put in a new organ, and the man leaves and employs somebody who is dishonest enough to say in effect that he can. That is scarcely a reasonable way to treat an honest doctor.

One of those lively men who are never without at least one lawsuit on hand goes to a lawyer and tells a long story. He declares he can prove certain things. The lawyer believes him and brings his case into court. It comes out at the trial that the story was mainly rubbish. There is no evidence—no case. Then the lively litigant turns around and abuses the lawyer. He says lawyers are not honest men. He did not get justice. Perhaps if he had got justice he would have been in Kingston many years ago serving his country for his board in a striped suit of clothes.

Merchants are expected to do unreasonable things every day. When a skinflint customer coolly asks a merchant to sell goods for less than they cost him he asks something that is scarcely reasonable. If he proposes to sell the merchant a crock of butter with a stone or a brick in the middle of it, he makes a proposition that can scarcely be called reasonable. A grain merchant who is asked to buy a load of grain with the best wheat on the top of the bag from which the sample was taken is asked to do about as unreasonable a thing as was ever asked of any preacher.

The men who suffer most from unreasonableness are tailors. Some people who like to wear good-fitting clothes are not very elegantly constructed. They expect the tailor to do more for them than nature did. The tailor can't. He may be a most accomplished artist. He may make garments that fit a well-shaped specimen of humanity like a glove. But he can't take down an ill-shaped customer and rebuild him on a new model. Hence the tailor "suffers." One fashionable tailor suffers more from unreasonableness in a week when business is good than most ministers suffer in a year.

Next to the tailor comes the shoemaker. It is most unreasonable to expect that a shoemaker should make a No. 4 boot for a No. 6 foot. "Six into four you can't." A foot that resembles in its general outlines a birch bark canoe, though perhaps not quite so large, cannot be fitted with an elegantly-shaped boot. Shoemakers have to face a vast amount of unreasonableness.

So have photographers. To make every photograph handsome, and at the same time correct, is a problem that no photographer has yet successfully grappled with.

Politicians are treated most unreasonably. In this regard they rank with tailors.

Sir John is expected to find offices for about 10,000 more people than there are offices to fill, even if all the places were vacant to begin with. Mr. Mowat has many applications for every vacant place, and several hundred probably for places that are not vacant. When a man wants an office in this country and does not get it he nearly always turns patriot. That is one reason why we have so many patriots in Canada.

Municipal men are often treated as unreasonably as politicians. Some of the people want good light, good police protection, good sidewalks, good school houses, good school teachers, good everything, and at the same time want the taxes kept down to almost nothing. That is sweetly reasonable.

Cheer up, brethren of the ministry. A little examination may show that ministers are the most reasonably dealt with men in society.

Moral: Let us all deal more reasonably with our neighbours.

THE congregation of that fine old historic church, Lady Glenorchy's, Edinburgh, have recently celebrated the centenary of the foundation of their church, and the minister, the Rev. Thomas Burns, took occasion to commemorate the high Christian character and benevolent disposition of Lady Glenorchy, the founder, and the work she accomplished.

FROM THE FAR WEST.

NOTES BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF REGINA.

MOOSE JAW.

Rev. S. J. Taylor, M.A., has laboured successfully in Moose Jaw, N. W. T., as ordained missionary. The congregation showed their appreciation of his services by preparing to give him a call recently, which, however, Mr. Taylor thought it best not to accept for the present. Meanwhile a call has been extended to the same gentleman from an entirely different quarter—the important congregation of New Westminster, B. C., made vacant by Mr. McKay's untimely death. A *pro re nata* meeting of Presbytery, to dispose of this call, will be held next week in Qu'Appelle Station. The Maritime Provinces have supplied to New Westminster quite a large share of the strength and influence of our cause there.

BATTLEFORD.

The brickwork on the new Presbyterian Church is making good progress at the hands of the King brothers. On Wednesday a bottle was deposited in the brickwork, in which was placed a short history of the Church, the minister's name, the communion roll, the names of the managing committee, the choir, the building committee, the contractor, the officers of the Mounted Police at this post and a copy of the *Herald* (*Battleford Herald*).

AN UNFOUNDED CHARGE.

The following little incident may serve to show how causelessly a minister's good name may be brought into disrepute. The *Strathroy Herald*, of the 11th inst., published over open signature a letter from a correspondent who had just returned from a visit to one of the towns of the far West, in which letter appeared, with considerable circumstantiality of detail, a statement to the effect that the Presbyterian minister there was in the habit of making a compact with people whom he wished to enroll as adherents, but who were lovers of sport and had no particular scruples as to the Sabbath day, in which compact he would give his official sanction—provided they would contribute to the revenues of his church—to their either attending service or going fishing as they might prefer!! Now it so happens that in the town in question there is a minister who holds and utters just such views; but not, it is almost needless to remark, a minister of the Presbyterian Church. The initials of names and the allusion to occupations furnished incidentally by the *Strathroy Herald's* correspondent in connection with the absurd charge, which, claiming all the while to be an eye and ear witness of the compact in question, he brings against our missionary and congregation in the far West, turn out to have reference to an entirely different denomination from ours. Yet it was difficult, for an obvious reason, for our missionary in the prompt denial he sent to explain this, and besides, where one reader believes a denial, ten believe, or at least will remember longest, the original charge; so it surely behooves correspondents to be very careful how they start serious reports against respected names and responsible Churches. A slip of the pen or of the memory may do some life or cause an irreparable harm.

A NEEDED ORDINANCE.

It is intended at first meeting this fall of the North-West Council, having jurisdiction over the Territories, to introduce a measure enabling congregations to hold property by regularly-appointed trustees and their successors in office. This ordinance will be a boon to Church life and organization in the Territories. Hitherto, in negotiating, for example, for loans for building purposes, the lenders, claiming that there was no provision for congregations acting through trustees, have required on the bond for repayment the signatures of all individual members and adherents of any means, and this has been a fruitful source of misunderstanding and discontent.

INDIAN MISSIONS.

The Government Inspector of Indian Agencies (Major McGibbon, a good Presbyterian,) is making his round among the Indians of the Territories. Part of his duty is to visit the schools, both ordinary and industrial. Major McGibbon takes great interest in his work; believes that the Indians can be both civilized and Christianized, and claims properly enough that the Government is now doing well for the Indians, and that the Churches ought to bestir them-