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FASHIONABLE FOLLIES.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—I am much obliged to you for your remarks upon Funerals. They were very much needed. In both the points to which you refer they have long been burdensome nuisances, which most people felt, though not inclined to speak out frankly on the subject. I don't suppose that there is now in most cases any service of wine or spirits on these occasions, though that was very common once, and is, I believe, not entirely dropped yet in certain localities. But apart altogether from that, the long wearisome delay and the trooping in of all and sundries to see the corpse, with the needless outlay on crape, &c., make what ought to be a sad, sympathetic duty, a perfect weariness to both soul and body. Surely, Mr. Editor, people will take your hint in as kindly a spirit as I am convinced it was given, and show respect for the dead by having some mercy upon the living. If you would take up another subject, and say some plain, outspoken words on it likewise, a good many of your readers would heartily thank you. I refer not to funerals, but to feasts. I suppose it arises from our increasing prosperity that there is so great an amount of extravagance shown in entertaining friends, or, rather, acquaintances. I should scarcely like to mention the sums that are said to be expended by people "professing godliness" in Toronto, Montreal and other cities and towns of Canada on single entertainments. There may very likely be an exaggeration in the amounts mentioned. This, however, is plain to any one who was ever at any of them: that the outlay must be anything but small. It would be a very moderate calculation to say that a good many members of churches—the Presbyterians not excepted—spend more on such things in a single winter, than they give to the Church of Christ in a good many years.

And it is not only the expense, though that is an important item. There are the ridiculously late hours, or, rather, I should say, very early ones, with the upbraid of all family order—compensated, I suppose, by the whole assemblage professing to have "family worship" about midnight, followed by supper or breakfast, as one likes best to describe it. In many cases dancing is one of the chief features of the evening, and if cards are not called into requisition—and in some instances they are—there are other things nearly equally objectionable. Some may be able to afford all this, and may rather like to have the opportunity of making a somewhat vulgar display. But others are not able; yet they must follow suit or allow themselves to be dropped out of the "circle." They cannot go to such entertainments without giving them in return, and to refuse to do this is thought to be going out of the world altogether; in the midst of all this, true sociality dies, the pocket is depleted, and the ability to help forward what are recognized to be good causes badly interfered with. Do, Mr. Editor, let us hear something pointed and direct on this subject. The evil is coming to assume very serious dimensions. Social intercourse becomes as stiff, pokerish and unnatural as can well be imagined, and a pleasant talk with one's friends and home to one's own house by eleven o'clock at latest has got to be among the lost arts and the lost blessings. I actually know of some of our most devoutly pious people having large dancing parties that don't break up till three or four o'clock in the morning. And the mission contributors? Are they in correspondence? I am not saying whether it is right or wrong to support Christian missions but these people say that it is right and dutiful and surely there ought to be some small amount of proportion in their treatment of different things according to the recognized greater or less importance of each. All I can say is that if "parties" as conducted according to the current standard of fashionable godliness, are indispensable developments of modern religious life, we had better drop the usual other contributions to religious purposes, at least for the winter months; for the former will take all that the most of us can spare and in a great many cases a good deal more.

I am, &c.

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Grow in grace, because this is the only way to be certain that you have any grace at all. If we aim not at growth in grace, we have never been converted to goodness. He that is satisfied with his attainments has attained nothing.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

I have read with much pleasure Mr. B.'s two letters contributed to your columns on the above subject, and as he seems to have given the subject a good deal of thought perhaps he will explain other passages occurring in the New Testament besides Hebrew xiii. 15. I would refer him particularly to the Book of Revelations xiv. 2, 3. "And I heard a voice from Heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder, and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps. And they sung as it were a new song before the throne and before the four beasts and the elders, and no man could learn that song but the one hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth." Now we know that the apostle by whom these words were penned, lived for many years to see the infant church rapidly increasing in numbers and influence, and had he considered instrumental music in the same light as Mr. B., as one of "the weak and beggarly elements of the source of the tabernacle," or as the great sin which some very worthy members of our church deem it, how could he have used the expressions which I have just quoted. I care not whether you take them in their liberal signification or as simply typical. Most assuredly not; and were it necessary to point to any internal evidence to show that instrumental music, *per se*, is not abrogated by the New Testament, I would refer to these and similar verses in this the latest and best book of the Bible. However, I leave it to Mr. B. and our other Theologians to discuss the Scriptural arguments, *pro* and *con*, permit me to refer to a few practical reasons why I and other younger lay members of the church advocate the introduction of organs into our churches.

There are very few, I am happy to say, that carry their views so far as to look upon instrumental music as a sin, I shall therefore leave this small class out of the question and take it for granted that the great body of our people look upon this subject as one of the "non essential," i. e., a matter which is not essential to salvation. While I hold strong views upon the great principles of the Christian religion as laid down in our confession of faith, I quite agree that Presbyterianism is possessed of that elasticity which enables us to mould it to every time and age. This is the first ground therefore that I take, that our church should keep up with the spirit of the age in matters non essential—so long as not forbidden by the word of God. The taste for music has become so general in this country; taught in our city schools, having a place in our national system of education, occupying a permanent place in the household enjoyments, cultivated on all hands in the Sabbath School, public concerts, and other ways too numerous to mention, that rendering praise to Him who has endowed us with such tastes, and the desire for their culture, we should offer the best we can give in the praises of the sanctuary. Can anything be more calculated to dampen our spiritual feelings and stop the praise of the lips, than to hear some old tune, *drowned out* by a Precentor or hurled at you with an energy as regards noise and volume of sound scarcely equaled even by an organ. Now, sir, we only ask the organ as an aid, simply to lead the congregation. For in the words of the poet Cowper:

There is in souls a sympathy with sounds,
And as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased.

Some chord in unison with what we hear,
Is touched within us, and the heart replies.

We cannot always secure a good precentor, the tones of the organ are always the same, and very often one is as much a machine as the other, and in point of comparison the organ but too often bears off the palm.

A second reason is to render our service more attractive. There is no use shutting one's eyes to the fact that the young members of our churches, especially in the larger cities, are apt to wander, and are generally found, especially at the evening diet of worship, in other churches where the form in use admits of instrumental music and more variety than our own services. I fancy that here I would at once be met with the argument: Well, if that is what they go for, we are better without them. I say no. Keep the young people, and the means of doing so are within your reach without any self sacrifice of principle, of doctrine or Church government. It is to the younger members of the church that we look to, to fill the places of those "called to rest" from time to time. In conclusion

I feel certain that were we to introduce organs into our city churches we would improve our congregational singing. The organ like almost everything else in this life may be abused; but in its proper place, and under good management, it may become one of the greatest aids in that most delightful of all exercises, the service of praise. In the words of the Psalmist David:—"Sing aloud unto God our strength; make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. Take a psalm and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the Psaltery."

Solicitor.

VOTING ON PROFESSORS.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—In your last issue, "Common Sense" states a difficulty which he has in this matter. Allow me to endeavour to remove his difficulty, and then to state graver difficulties which occur to my own mind.—"Common Sense" complains of want of information needed to guide him in voting aright. But surely persons nominating any one in a Presbytery will be in a position to communicate ample information. Those fitted for the office by talent attainments, and mental habits are not so numerous and so little known in our church that many members in each Presbytery can possibly lack the information required. But even if any Presbytery should not know whom to nominate, the simplest and wisest thing will be to nominate no one at all; especially as the General Assembly, judged by its recent action, will not necessarily be guided by a number of Presbyteries on that matter. When the matter comes up before the General Assembly, all the information desired will be elicited in the course of discussion. But surely it would be a most indelicate thing to discuss through the newspapers the qualifications of men who do not offer themselves as candidates for the office, and all would probably not accept of it if it were offered to them.

But my difficulties are of a greater nature and may be presented in the following questions:—

1. Who instructed Presbyteries to nominate professors at this juncture? Has the College Board done so? I am not aware that it has; but I am certain it is not competent to do so. Thus the nomination will be of no value whatever.

2. What need is there of excessive haste in this matter, especially as Dr. Inglis' resignation is not yet reported to the Assembly? We may well pause before incurring greater expense in view of the fact that Dr. Inglis said that his conviction, from long experience in the College Board, that without an endowment an additional Professor could not be supported, influenced him a good deal in pressing his resignation; and in view of the fact that the College Endowment Scheme is making so slow progress.

3. Why seek to take the nomination out of the hands of the next General Assembly, without consulting it? Why should the Presbyteries now do what they never did before? It may be said that it is desirable to have the opinions of Presbyteries on the matter. If so let the Assembly ask it; or let the Presbyteries overture the Assembly to enact a law making it imperative that professors be nominated by Presbyteries.

"INQUIRER."

A WORD FOR KNOX COLLEGE.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—It is high time that the members of the Canada Presbyterian Church became alive to the necessities of Knox College. Most of them are ignorant of the fact that the present building is simply a disgrace to a body so numerous and so influential. Many who have not seen it have the idea that it must be a grand edifice. It certainly has a grand appearance in a picture of it to be seen in the recently issued book, "Life and Times of Dr. Burns." That plate summons up before the imagination a vision of marble pillars, extensive colonnades, graceful domes and windows, set to catch and reflect the light of Heaven. Knox College, like many a homely face, does make a very good photograph, but it is not a fairy palace for all that.

We recommend every Presbyterian who visits Toronto to step up Yonge Street and view their College, mark well its bulwarks and its beauty, and closely inspect its capacity and accommodations. If they do not return from the inspection somewhat ashamed of their connection with it, their reflections will not have taken a proper direction. If outside the building is dingy and dark, inside it is cramped and confined.

Irregular without, more irregular within, it is enough in itself to disorganize the mental and moral faculties of a man of taste and feeling.

Its worst fault is not want of appearance, but want of accommodation. It requires but a glance to perceive some of its many deficiencies: its miserable hall and its wretched lecture-room.

A hall in which the students can hold their mass-meetings is essentially the full life of a Theological Seminary. It is the heart of the institution. There should be the fullest throbbing of student life. There the hearts of the students, as fellow-labourers, are fused together in Christian sympathy, and grow responsive to the same noble emotions. Without a suitable hall, such life becomes impossible. Now, no one can sit for twenty minutes in what is called "Divinity Hall, Knox College," without feeling mean, without looking toward door or window for as speedy escape as possible.

If, Mr. Editor, we cannot have a new College building entire, for charity's sake, let us have a new College hall, where our students can escape from the joyless, melancholy atmosphere that hangs around the room where they now attempt to hold their meetings.

Again, with regard to our lecture-rooms, we are treating our Professors neither honourably nor honestly. We elect them to "chairs" in the College, and then with the critic's eye we mark their success or failure. We do not give them a fair chance, for we put them into lecture-rooms which work against them, and in which nothing but genius can succeed in keeping up attention among the students. Everyone will admit that a man cannot speak with power to a class which is not face to face with him. In the class-rooms of Knox College, a few can sit facing the professor, the majority present to him their profiles, and some sit with their backs toward him. With such an arrangement as this, it is only superior power on the part of the professor and deliberately constrained attention on the part of the student, that can prevent a lecture from becoming dull and spiritless. All the magnetism of the eye, and all the sympathy of expression are lost.

We could furnish many details showing how inadequate in accommodation and how inappropriate in design the present building is. We forbear. Let any one interested in the matter go and inspect for himself. We are quite sure that if any one does so, from a spirit of denominational pride, if from no higher motive, he will come to the conclusion that "something must be done." There is too much apathy throughout the church towards the college. The college is the centre of Church life. Influence the college and you influence the church to its remotest corners. Is it not then a matter much to be regretted that the college should be impeded in its progress and weakened in its influence for want of a suitable building and for want of funds to carry on its operations? We have heard men speak disparagingly of Knox in comparison with other colleges. There is no good reason why Knox should be inferior to any Theological Seminary in the world. It has distinct advantages over Princeton, over Union, over Auburn, over Glasgow and over Edinburgh, and would have a fair chance to surpass them all but for the cramping want of pence.

I believe that the college is suffering because men of capital in the church have not had their attention called to its wants.

Let a reasonable scheme be laid before them for the erection of a new college and I am confident there is wealth enough and liberality enough in our church to secure an immediate result in the way of donations.

Then when we have a college in whose prosperity and renown, we take a pride, there will be no danger of want of funds for its support.

This is a subject worthy of agitation and worthy of action. Americans have one advantage over us. When a good and necessary scheme presents itself to their minds they act upon it and act at once. We take years to deliberate and re-deliberate.

Mr. Editor, I think we might have American promptness of action in this matter, and I hope we shall.

Yours very truly,

EXCOLLEGIAN.

We mock ourselves a hundred times a day when we deride our neighbour, and detect in others the defects which are more manifest in us, and admire them with a malicious malice and envy.—Montaigne.

Random Readings.

Self-sacrifice is the ground of church harmony.

We only really live when we can truthfully say, "To me to live is Christ."

Let our path to the fountain be worn with daily journeys; let the key to our treasury of grace be bright with constant use.

Do we read of the Lord's rejoicing above once or twice? He had a most exquisite sense of a world that had lost communion.

Self-loathing is a characteristic of a spiritual mind. The axe is laid at the root of a vain-glorious spirit.—Cecil.

True zeal is a sweet, heavenly and gentle flame, which maketh us active for God, but always within the sphere of love.—God worth.

O how good it is to love on earth as they love in heaven; to learn to cherish each other in this world, as we shall do eternally in the next.—Francis de Sales.

Great occasions of serving God present themselves but seldom, but little ones frequently. Now he that is faithful in that which is least is also faithful in much.

A spiritual mind has something of the nature of the sensitive plant. I shall smart if I touch this or that. There is a holy shrinking away from evil.—Cecil.

Faith is the ladder on which the believer is constantly mounting to ascend into the heavenly Canaan, from thence to bring down clusters of delicious grapes, to refresh him in his wilderness journey.

Wisdom and truth, the offspring of the sky, are immortal, but cunning and deception, the meteors of the earth, after glistening for a moment, must pass away.—Robert Hall.

I don't think we ought to allow of a fretted mind. Every day is often made up of unexpected little matters, needing the help and strength of God, and it is blessed to prove Him sufficient for the least as the greatest.

There are no stages in redemption. "Christ has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." But there are many stages in learning what redemption really is.

Endeavour to take your work quietly. Anxiety and over action are the cause of sickness and restlessness. We must use our judgment to control our excitement, or our bodily strength will break down.

I had rather put my foot upon a bridge as narrow as Hungerford, which went all the way across, than on a bridge that was as wide as the world, if it did not go all the way across the stream.

If thou desirest Christ for a perpetual guest, give him all the keys of thine heart, let not one nail be locked up from him; give him the range of every room, and the key of every chamber; thus you will constrain him to remain.

Look we into the life of Christ and we shall find the philosophy of the simple, the nurse of young men, the meat of strong men, the buckler of the weak, and the physic of the sick; the book full of divine instructions; fit for all mankind.—St. Chrysostom.

Death is that which all men suffer, but not all men with one mind, neither all men in one manner. For being of necessity a thing common, it is through the manifold persuasions, dispositions, and occasions of men, with equal desert both of praise and dispraise, shunned by some by others desired. So that absolutely we cannot discommend, we cannot absolutely approve, either willingness to live or forwardness to die.—Hooker.

The soul that can really say, "All my springs are in thee," is lifted above all creature confidences, human hopes and earthly expectations. It is not that God does not use the creature in a thousand ways to minister to us. But there is a vast difference between God's using the creature to bless us and our leaning on the creature to the exclusion of Him.—Aelaide Newton.

John Ruskin, in his last "Address to the Workingmen of Great Britain," says of his boyhood training: "My mother forced me, by steady daily toil, to read every syllable through from Genesis to the Apoclypse about once a year; and to that discipline I owe not only a knowledge of the book, which I find occasionally serviceable, but much of my general power of taking pains, and the best part of my taste in literature."

Unquietness is the greatest evil that can come to the soul, excepting sin. For as seditions and civil discords of a commonwealth run it entirely, and disable it to resist a stranger, so our heart, being troubled and disquieted in itself, loseth strength to maintain the virtues which it had gained, and with it the means to resist the temptations of the enemy, who at that time useth all kinds of endeavours to fish (as they say) in troubled waters.—De Sales.

The past is no safe ground; and yet there are those who have sit mumbering their satisfaction. They boast of what they have done. They have made fortunes. They have scraped in money; they are not careful to recount how! They have built warehouses. They have invented this, that, or the other thing. And so they sit piping about themselves as if the world had been sustained to keep them up, and as if the little that they had done here and there was a fit theme for their everlasting meditation.—Becher.