

## Our Contributors.

### The Church Musical Director.

BY UNCLE WILL.

"At the—— Church the pastor Rev. Dr.—— will preach both morning and evening. There will be special music rendered by the choir. The—— male quartette will sing at both services. In the evening they will sing Dudley Buck's setting of "Lead Kindly Light." There will be a solo by Mr.—— and duet by Miss—— and Mr.——. The anthem will be Dudley Buck's "Rock of Ages."

The above is a sample of a church announcement. We cannot therefore wonder at the following advertisement which appeared in one of the leading dailies:

Organist and Choirmaster—teacher of pipe organ, reed organ, piano, singing, harmony; desires engagement (15 years' English experience); choral and amateur operatic conductor; "Mikado," "Utopia," "Geisha," "Greek Slave," "San Toy" given under personal direction in England.

The advt. is a natural corollary of the announcement. We cannot blame the man very much for considering that a knowledge of comic opera would be received as a good recommend for the position of choirmaster. I am glad to say that the announcement did not refer to any Presbyterian church. But they are not above censure. Some eighteen months ago a Presbyterian church advertised for a choirmaster—amongst the applicants was a member of an operatic company from the United States, which was unfortunate enough to get stranded in the immediate vicinity of Toronto. That his application was seriously considered, altho' his chief recommendation was his connection with the operatic company and supposed musical ability was evidenced by the fact that he was allowed to conduct the choir for some three or four weeks. We therefore cannot cast stones. In choosing a choirmaster or organist something more than musical ability is necessary. I take it that next to the minister in importance in church life and work is the thoroughly qualified organist or choirmaster. Each has his own important sphere of usefulness. While subordinate to and working harmoniously with the minister the whole musical service of the church should be in the hands of the choirmaster, church Sabbath school, prayer meeting and outside of, but leading up to the regular choir and congregational practice. There should be an elementary class in sight singing.

"It may draw a smile" says W. S. Pratt in Musical Ministers of the Church, "if we venture to urge that a musical leader needs to know something about music. Yet there are many leaders who can play or sing very fairly, who are yet not even fair musicians. I mean they know little of music as a general art, little of its history, or its theory, of its diversified styles and their applications, particularly as all these have to do with church music. In the long run it is surely better to seek musical leaders who are broadly intelligent about their art, than those who are merely clever in doing things with their fingers on their vocal cords. Church music needs competent knowledge far more than flashy brilliance of execution or even what is called pronounced musical temperament."

I think it a most fortunate thing that many of our organists are women. The truth is

that in many most important ways they average much better than men, as responsible workers in the field of church music, they have capacities of sentiment, enthusiasm, fidelity and high spirituality that are of inestimable value. As Public and High School teachers women have shown both originality and undoubted ability. Why should success not attend their efforts as leaders in Psalmody and Sacred Song. If only churches will take the pains to make the position of musical leader suitable for a self-respecting candidate, able young women will more and more be drawn to prepare themselves adequately for this service, and may be expected to do even more than they already have to further its best interests as a branch of Christian work.

### A New Text Book.

Elementary Botany, by Percy Groom, M. A., F. L. S., Examiner in Botany to the University of Oxford. 275 Illustrations, together with the manual of the More Common Herbaceous Plants of Ontario and Quebec, by D. Penhallow, B. Sc., Professor of Botany, McGill University, Montreal, 12 mo. cloth, 487 pages, \$1.25. Copp. Clark & Co., Toronto.

The rapid progress of the Science of Botany has induced the necessity of providing a new text-book for use in High Schools and Collegiate Institutes to direct students along lines of recent investigations.

This volume is an up-to-date presentation of the subject of that high scholarly quality which Oxford and Cambridge standards demand in the case not only of college but of secondary school text-books. It is clear in definition, exact in statement, orderly in arrangement, and most thorough. Its method is much more scientific than that of any other introductory text book accessible to our students. The various topics included in general morphology are handled in a most satisfactory way. The classification of angiospermes is fresh, lucid and informing in a marked degree. The chapters on the physiology of plants are a new feature in an elementary text-book. They bring some of the most instructive and interesting results of advanced enquiry to the attention of the junior student in a way that deepens his interest while enlarging his fund of information. This part is furnished with a good dictionary of technical terms and a full index. The illustrations deserve special mention of their excellent quality.

Professor Penhallow's manual occupies nearly one half the book. It is based upon Gray but takes full account of others and the most recent authorities. On every page it shows evidence of his own careful, scholarly investigation. The analysis is exact and the descriptions (more minute than those of Spotton) reduce the difficulty of identification to a minimum. The full index makes reference to every item easy.

It is in every respect an ideal text-book for our Canadian schools, and if allowed a fair field would ere long occupy it fully.

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Certain thoughts are prayers. There are moments when, whatever be the attitude of the body, the soul is on its knees.—Victor Hugo.

### Tact in Mission Work.

We have already given our readers two or three extracts from the bright letters of "W. A. M." to the Toronto News. In the following we get interesting glimpses of the great need for strenuous efforts in carrying on missionary operations in British Columbia and the Territories, as well as examples of tact and endurance displayed by a young minister who is now the successful pastor of a thriving congregation:

Much might be said of the opportunities of this Province, (British Columbia) as a field of Christian missionaries. The demand is great and success is assured, but the price of success is courage, push and genuine piety. If in Ontario the spirit of energy and self-sacrifice is demanded in the Christian minister, still more is this the case in British Columbia. Here Whittier's words are specially appropriate:

"Thine to work as well as pray,  
Clearing thorny wrongs away;  
Plucking up the weeds of sin,  
Letting heaven's warm sunshine in."

Your correspondent would bear testimony to the presence of many such men not only in British Columbia, but in Manitoba, and, indeed, in all this great Western land. I have met them everywhere, and have uniformly admired their earnestness, their tact, their patience and wonderful consecration to their work. And in serving others they have received bountiful compensation, not of gold or silver, this in most cases has been scant enough, but in all that goes to make up a strong, manly, useful life. They learn to handle the axe, the hammer, the saw; to build a church, a house or a stable as well as preach a gospel that comforts, cheers and strengthens. What a striking illustration of development through work we have in the late Dr. Robertson, superintendent of Presbyterian mission in this country. He did much for the West, but the West did much for him. Had he remained all his lifetime the minister of a little village congregation in Ontario, would he have developed into the strong, broad useful man he became.

Tact, or a readiness to adopt means to an end, is a requisite to success in every department of life, but especially so in doing Christian work among shrewd, intelligent, but withal careless, ungodly men, such as are found everywhere in the West. Let me illustrate. Not a great distance from where I write is a town, now containing a population of 3,000. In it there is a church, strong, healthy, self-sustaining, paying their pastor a salary of \$1,500 a year. That pastor to-day stands in the front rank of the ministers of his church, and his history is one of singular interest. He came to his present charge, just seventeen years ago, and on the first C. P. R. regular through train that left Winnipeg for the Coast. He found the present town, then a hamlet of 800 people, composed of miners of all kinds, of Western toughs, many of them from Montana. The place was full of saloons, gamblers and lewd women. Drinking fighting, licentiousness and every form of vice ran riot. It was a pandemonium of lawlessness. Of course there was no pretence to Sabbath observance, only that the day exceeded all other days in the carnival of crime. Our missionary arrived on Saturday, and next day, July 2, 1886, he set up the Gospel banner. Twenty-eight attended the service in the morning, and forty-two in the evening; people of all denominations attended, Roman Catholics, as well as Protestants. As soon as the missionary became acquainted with