

3. The man to be chosen Moderator will know his appointment some time beforehand and will be able to make preparation for the office. A prepared speech at the opening of Assembly is not always needed. But there are occasions when it might be very appropriate and useful. And it would come with a better grace from the man who could reasonably look forward to the position, than from a man who must seem, if he gives a prepared address, to have been counting pretty confidently upon what was only problematical. But there are other reasons for preparation. It is necessary that the Moderator of Assembly should be thoroughly conversant with business, church forms, and rules of procedure, that his conducting the business may be expeditious, and his decisions such as to command confidence.

4. There is still another reason. When the claims of several persons are being considered matters may come up that are not suitable for discussion in a public place such as the Assembly or even the Presbytery. There may be reasons for or against a candidate that could not or should not be discussed in public, which ought to be fully considered. The College of ex-Moderators is in an excellent position to do that. They meet in private. They can consider many things fully which could only be hinted at in public. Then, further, the College of ex-Moderators can bring a prepared finding before the Assembly—a thing the Presbyteries cannot do—and thus obviate the delay and discussion connected with the open selection of a Moderator on the floor of the Assembly.

I consider these valid and substantial reasons in favour of the College of ex-Moderators. G.

#### THE DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER.

MR. EDITOR,—It appears your correspondent W. R. S. in a late issue has come to the conclusion that the Word of God forbids such marriages, but gives only one text as proof, wherein *marriage* is never mentioned, but thinks he can discover the forbidding of a man to marry his deceased brother's wife. I have examined the said text and others treating more fully and clearly on the subject, and have come to the conclusion that such marriages are not forbidden.

It appears that the advocates of prohibition are driven to rest their case on Lev. xviii. 16, and that by parity of reason the woman is forbidden to marry her deceased sister's husband, because the above passage says: "Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife." Now, whatever the above passage may mean, it cannot be a prohibition of such marriages for the following reasons: God's commands are never contradictory, neither does He command anything that will diminish the glory of His name or lessen the happiness of His people. Therefore, those texts which are obscure must be explained in harmony with those that are perfectly clear treating on the same subject.

Turn we then to Deut. xxv. 5-10. There we find under certain circumstances it was a commanded duty for a man to marry his deceased brother's wife, and a disgraceful penalty was annexed if he refused to do so. And this was not a new law, but the regulating of an old one, as old as the days of Jacob. (Gen. xxxviii. 8-10) There we find this law for the first time referred to as one apparently well-known and under divine sanction, for the Lord slew a grandson of Jacob's for endeavouring to evade it. Here, then, in clear, plain, unmistakable words such marriages are commanded; therefore, whatever Lev. xviii. 16 forbids, it cannot be them. And it should be kept in mind, that Deuteronomy is a repetition, or rather a clearer exposition of the laws given in Leviticus. Therefore, when any doubt arises, it is safest to explain the obscure in Leviticus by the clear exposition of Deuteronomy.

It has been said that this is an exceptional case to the general law forbidding such marriages to preserve family inheritances intact. But, by referring to the passage already given in Genesis, it will be seen that that law or custom prevailed for such marriages under the sanction of God before the children of Israel had any inheritance in the land of Canaan. True, this was an exceptional case in Deuteronomy, but only as far as making that which was optional imperative when a married brother died without leaving issue. Is it then consistent with the character of God to conclude that, what He here enjoins as a duty in Deuteronomy with a penalty annexed for its neglect, the same thing is forbidden as a sin in Lev. i. ? There-

fore, the conclusion is irresistible that such marriages are not forbidden by Lev. xviii. 16, much less that of a man to his deceased wife's sister.

But let our opponents take comfort; there is nothing even in Deuteronomy compelling them to marry their deceased brother's wife or their wife's sister. Will they allow us like liberty who believe we lawfully have that privilege? EQUITY

#### MUSKOKA MISSIONS.

MR. EDITOR, My reply to Mr. Findlay's communication is, in substance, the same as to "H. K's." The letter in question was written seven months ago. Its aim was, by a presentation of facts, to excite an interest in a Church and Manse Building Fund for Ontario. After the delay of several months, Mr. Findlay has seen fit to give it a new lease of life. From the printed minutes of the Barrie Presbytery I obtained the information that he confuted certain statements in said letter. What these are, I have no means of ascertaining, as I was absent, but doubtless can find out at next meeting. Mr. Findlay does not venture to assail the correctness of the picture drawn—dark though it is—of unfinished and wrecked churches in Muskoka. He shields his confronting under the all-sweeping declaration: "The facts admit a different interpretation." In what that interpretation is different from what the writer placed on them, he does not condescend to state. Though clothed with the euphonious title: "Superintendent of Missions, Muskoka, Parry Sound and Algoma," I am not aware that he possesses the power of a Presbytery, which he seems, at least, to arrogate with an air of triumph, "and so on, and so on." He imagines he has found out one vulnerable spot, "No manse north of Bracebridge!" Is there not one at Parry Sound? The statement made by me is literally correct, as the following sentence clearly shows. I was thinking of the country along the Junction Railway—"north." He states that in the vast area traversed by him, six or seven churches are to be erected. With a church renovated at a cost of \$660, a manse and two churches in process of erection in Huntsville and neighbourhood, there is building up, "not" pulling down. In closing I may express my conviction that my time is better occupied with practical Christian work than in idle disputation which cannot contribute one iota to church extension in a spiritually necessitous region of country. JAMES SIEVERIGHT.

#### THE PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN INDIA.

BY REV. GEORGE H. GUTTERSON, MELER, MADURA MISSION.

The following striking account of the people in the Madura district is given in a familiar letter from Rev. Mr. Gutterson, who was on a missionary tour and in camp near the village of Mangalum.

As I pen these lines, the village near my camp is astir. It is early morning and the day's work begins, for work the people must to keep body and soul together, although some of them are scarcely aware that they have any soul. Do they begin work with a hearty meal? Not they. A cup (earthen) of cold rice gruel, or a handful of cold boiled rice seasoned with a red pepper, is all they have, and they are glad enough to get even that.

I wish that some of our good Christian men and women from America could see this material out of which we missionaries are trying to build the future Christian civilization of this district. Let us look about us. A dozen men, more or less, and some young women are the first comers. They are sharpening their bill-hooks on the broad root of a banyan-tree near the tent, preparatory to their day's work of wood-cutting in the mountains, four or five miles away. The men are naked, except a scanty cloth about the waist and a few rags over their shoulders. The women are not much better off. They will work all day, returning at nightfall with as much firewood as they can carry on their heads, and to-morrow they will carry it from seven to ten miles to market, and receive from seven to ten cents for two days' labour! Not one of them can read; they are dirty and might be called ragged if they had any clothes at all!

Next appear the village cattle and the children who herd them, followed by the old women, shrill-voiced, and vile-tongued, who come to gather cow-dung for fuel! If one desires to see how wretched and disgusting it is possible for old age to appear, let him visit the

Queen's dominions in India. These old women, haggard, unkempt, unclothed, makers of mischief, promoters of quarrels, aiding in all sorts of sin, covetous, sticklers for caste and custom—how can one love their souls, or feel a Christian interest in their welfare sufficient to endure it all and work for their uplifting? These before my tent are quarrelling glibly over their respective shares in the fuel business aforesaid. I shall have to request them to leave, one can neither think, read, nor pray, with such a din in his ears. Yet they are not the poorest of the poor, and they have heard the gospel message many times, but they are as if they had not heard it, steeped in ignorance, yet so exalted by their caste that they would never allow a Christian, however clean, to even touch one of their cooking utensils! This is caste—the great barrier to our work.

I asked some villagers recently their idea of the hereafter, and they had never heard that there was a hereafter. Death ends all for them, and the present is useful in so far as it affords means of satisfying hunger, passion, and love of money and power. Yet I do not say that they are not a worshipping people, for they are, in a way. I was asked to visit and give medicine to the wife of the chief village official, who was dangerously ill. The man is said to be worth \$10,000, yet I found his wife lying upon the ground, with only a mat under her, in a little den so close that I could hardly endure it, a bundle of straw for a pillow, and an old crone sitting by, and her pulse at one hundred and twelve degrees! Her husband would not touch her nor scarcely approach her.

As I write this, the morning sun gleams from the white walls of their great temple three miles away on the mountain side—a temple built to the god Vishnu. They throng its great festivals and sacrifice to its royally appareled god; they raise the hands in worship to priestly Brahmans who minister in its dark recesses. From this, and other ancient places of worship in this strange land, goes forth an influence felt far and wide among a people who are naturally religious; but their religion is that of fear, not of love, and it is powerless to change the heart. Yet as the years pass away, our faith is that God's Word is here to stay, and that the heaven is working downward through the whole mass.

I should lose courage if I could not feel that promising attempts are being made to secure good ground by teaching the young.—*Missionary Herald.*

#### THE GROWTH OF LONDON.

It may indeed be safely asserted that London is the greatest city this world ever saw. Never before in this planet's history has there been gathered together such a concourse of human beings. Nineveh might boast of a population, according to the Book of Jonah, of 800,000 or 900,000; Rome, which, like most of the olden cities, resembled London as the centre of a world-wide empire, never reached a third part of its population, good authorities setting down the highest number its people ever reached, which was in the days of Nero, at about 1,020,000; and Pekin of modern times is said to be the only city which has any claim to rank beside it; but eye-witnesses tell us that Pekin is rather a peopled district than a city. Paris, Vienna, and Berlin united would but a little more than equal it in the number of its people; and twenty-three of the other largest cities of these isles must be rolled into one to make a second London. Sir Salar Jung, in visiting it, may also, while describing Paris as "the city of pleasure," well refer to "the severe aspect and activity of London," seeing that 10,488 vehicles course through twenty-four of its principal thoroughfares every hour, and 384,000 pedestrians and 75,000 vehicles pass over its bridges daily. In the words of Sir Joseph Bazalgette, "it is now without a rival as regards its size and population, not only in the present, but as far as we know in the past history of the world. Its population is equal to that of the whole state of Holland, is greater than that of Scotland, and double that of Denmark, and if it continues to increase at the same rate until the end of the century it will then equal that of Ireland, as indeed Outer London now does."—*Christian Chronicle.*

PROFESSOR CHRISTIEB, of Bonn, has established an Evangelist School called the *Johanneum*. Already nine evangelists have been sent out. These messengers endeavour to reach the non-church-going masses by means of prayer-meetings, addresses, visitings, etc. Their success, so far, has been encouraging. Both in mind and method the Bonn Professor is not unlike the English Spurgeon.