

Our Contributors.

HOW TO KEEP CHRISTMAS.

BY KNOXONIAN.

The average Presbyterian does not go to church on Christmas Day. Most Presbyterians think if they attend church twice every Sabbath during the year they do very well. So they do. A man who goes to church regularly all the year round does not need to bring up his average by attending service on holidays and by putting on a spurt during Lent. Presbyterian people never were great on "times and seasons." They prefer keeping up a good average all the year round. They are right.

Christmas should be one of the happiest days in the year. There is no use, however, in a man or a family saying: "Now we will have a happy Christmas," unless steps are taken to make the day a happy one. No man can be happy by simply resolving to be happy. You might as well try to lift yourself over a fence by pulling your bootstraps. Suppose a family were to meet on Christmas Eve and pass a resolution that they would have a pleasant Christmas Day, the resolution would not do anything for them. Moved by Paterfamilias, and seconded by Materfamilias, That we spend a Happy Christmas. Fudge. That resolution would be as useless as the votes of thanks at the end of a tea-meeting. To make Christmas happy you must use the necessary means. Calvinists believe in using the means as well as in Foreordination.

Perhaps one of the first steps to be taken in the way of making Christmas happy is to buy some nice presents for the family. There are some people who object to Christmas presents or presents at any other time. They hold that by giving your wife and children presents you purchase their affection—you bribe them to love you. The man who makes that objection must stand on a very high moral plane. In fact he is so much above ordinary mortals that it is a wonder he is not translated like Enoch and Elijah. He is altogether too pure for this lower world. His logic, if applied all round, would put an immediate end to bowing, hand-shaking, kissing and all the other kinds of friendly courtesy by which we show our goodwill or love toward those around us. Living in the light of this severe morality, a man would have to say: "I can't bow to my neighbour, or shake hands with him, lest he may think I am trying to purchase his good-will." A husband would have to say: "I must not kiss my wife when I leave home, because that would be bribing her to think of me while I am gone. I must not bribe her in that way." As a rule, women like to see their husbands move on a high moral plane; but we venture to think there are few women who care to see their husbands so elevated above this world that they cannot give them and the children a nice little something at Christmas. The best of wives can stand a little of that kind of bribery and be all the better for it. And then there is room for the terrible suspicion that the man who is too good to buy a few presents for his family may not be prevented from doing so by his superior piety. Meanness may have more to do with it than piety. The man's heart may be very small and hard and selfish. Perhaps he has no heart at all. There are masculine hyped who pass for men that have no hearts. It is a good thing, then, to give a few presents—not necessarily expensive, but just nice little reminders that almost anybody can procure. It doesn't hurt even a minister to take something of that kind.

The next step necessary to make Christmas happy is to begin the day in a happy frame of mind. That important individual called by way of courtesy the head of the family may have been late in the place of business on Christmas Eve—presumably he was in the place of business. Having worked hard all day and until late in the evening, he may be the least bit crusty on Christmas morning. That frame of mind does not promise well. Get out of it as soon as possible. Think of all God's blessings since last Christmas. Try to solve this problem: "How much owest thou unto my Lord? How much do you owe Him for home, food, raiment, reason, providential care, restraining grace, the hope of glory? How much do you owe Him for His goodness to the members of the family, for His goodness to those that He brought back from the brink of the grave, for His goodness to those that you would not bring back from the grave if you could?" Meditations like

these should put a man in good humour on Christmas morning. If not, there is something more seriously wrong than the dulness of his razor. His heart is wrong, or perhaps he has not got one, or it may be so small that no amount of meditation can enlarge it.

A woman who knows how to keep house, and who has had a decent Christmas present, won't keep the house in a turmoil all day making the Christmas dinner. If she has been properly treated she can prepare a maximum dinner with the minimum of fuss. This contributor does not dare to discuss this point at length.

If possible there should be a family gathering on Christmas Day. Happy is the family that can gather round the Christmas table in unbroken numbers. Happy is the household that can meet at least once a year. To many this is impossible, but where it can be done the members of the family should endeavour to meet. The associations and memories of that annual meeting help many a boy to resist temptation during the whole year.

So much for the positive side of the Christmas question. Now let us put in a few don'ts.

Don't worry about business on Christmas Day. You may not have made as much money during '85 as you expected, but that cannot be helped now. You may worry enough to spoil your dinner or check the digestive process, but worrying would not change the balance to the amount of one cent. Therefore, don't worry.

Don't argue about politics. Do you suppose Sir John Macdonald is troubling himself about you? Do you imagine that Mr. Blake or Sir Richard Cartwright are spoiling their digestion about you? Sir John is perhaps dining with Tupper in that palatial \$40,000 house in London, and neither of them cares if you were taking a dinner made out of sole-leather and saw-dust. Mr. Blake and Mr. Mowat are not disturbing their family by a heated discussion about you or your family. Don't talk politics. Be a politician by all means, but don't be a fool.

Don't indulge in any amusements that leave a sting behind. Perhaps some young reader would like to know if dancing is included. All amusements that leave a sting are included, and probably you know how it is yourself about dancing a good deal better than this contributor knows. If dancing leaves a sting then don't dance.

Don't indulge in anti-Scott beverages. That is our advice. We don't keep a conscience for the regulation of our neighbours' conduct as some men do. We use our own conscience for regulating our own conduct—not the conduct of our neighbours. But we may be allowed to ask all good men if they think Christmas cannot be made happy without the use of wine. We know that it *can*.

To the thousands of good men and women whom KNOXONIAN has had the honour and privilege of speaking to in these columns during the past year, he, from his heart of hearts, wishes a Happy Christmas in the best sense of the word. To the many homes that his papers have entered he wishes the best blessings that our Heavenly Father can bestow. Friends one and all, may those who meet you and greet you next Friday meet you in the home above!

When soon or late you reach that coast
O'er life's rough ocean driven,
May you rejoice, no wanderer lost,
Your families all in heaven.

SCOTTISH MONASTERIES AND ABBEYS.

THEIR RISE, BENEFITS AND CAUSES OF DEMOLITION.

While passing a few weeks last summer on the East Coast of Scotland I visited the remains of some of the monasteries and abbeys, which were so numerous in that country in pre-Reformation times, and whose ruins still form a picturesque feature in the landscape. I afterwards read such accounts of the origin and daily life of the occupants of these abbeys as were accessible, making notes for my own information. On looking over these memoranda, it occurred to me that the subject to which they relate might interest such of the readers of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN as are not familiar with the state of ecclesiastical matters in that part of Britain before the teaching of John Knox and the writings of the Westminster Divines had so completely changed the ideas of those residing in the North, and made them the intelligent, educated and industrious people they afterward became. With this object I have cast my notes into a narrative form, and

made a letter, which, though lacking the liveliness and present interest of those from the pen of "Knoxonian," may at least suggest to some a topic full of interest and instruction, if followed up by subsequent study and research.

A few words regarding some of the numerous orders of the

MONASTIC CLERGY,

who were settled in Scotland during the five centuries which preceded the Reformation, may introduce the subject. Their conventual establishments were nearly two hundred in number, not including hospitals. Besides their distinction from the secular clergy, these monks were divided into two classes—the older, or endowed monks, who lived on rents and lands bestowed upon them, and the newer, or begging friars, who were supported by alms, and who had few or no endowments. Both these classes were still further subdivided. The endowed monks were known in Scotland as Monks of St. Augustine, etc., according to the names of those who had framed the rules by which they lived—the colour of the robes they wore, or the places in which they had first been established. The begging friars were divided into Black, or Dominicans, Gray, or Franciscans, White, or Carmelites, according to the colour of their dress or the name of their founders.

Several of both these classes had corresponding female orders or nuns, who lived by rules, alleged to have been framed by St. Augustine, St. Benedict, or St. Francis.

During the reign of Malcolm III. (1057-1093), the Normans had begun to erect in England those magnificent

CATHEDRALS AND ABBEY CHURCHES,

which are still such objects of interest. And Scotland, poor as she was, resolved to follow the example set her, so far as her limited means would allow. The Abbey Church of Dunfermline, erected in the Norman style, seems to have been one of the earliest of such buildings in Scotland. The simple and somewhat antiquated rites of the Culdees being regarded as unsuitable for such costly edifices, it was decided to import from England or the Continent the new monastic or regular clergy, whose greater scholastic learning, gorgeous ritual, sanctity of manners (apparent or real), and courtliness of style, were better fitted for such grand cathedrals: And here a few sentences regarding

THE CULDEES

may find a place. They were secular canons of Celtic origin, educated and trained in the ancient abbeys and colleges, such as Iona, St. Andrew's, etc. They first appear in Scottish history after 800 A.D. Their college at Abernethy was called a university in the time of Malcolm III., or shortly after. They, as well as the old Scottish parochial clergy, were but slightly in subjection to Rome. Many of them also were married and they were succeeded in their official positions by their children. By the time of Malcolm III. the Culdees had in many cases greatly deteriorated in learning and otherwise, so that the heads of their religious houses were rather lay-barons than learned ecclesiastics. Not being bound by any special rules of living, the parish priests and Culdees were called *secular* clergy; while the monastic orders, who ultimately supplanted the Culdees, and even the parochial clergy to a large extent, and whose lives, habits and studies were framed according to the regulations of their founders, and approved by the Popes, were called the *regular*, or regulated clergy. These two classes had long contended—the *regulars* to gain position and power, the *seculars* to retain the position they had. In Scotland the regular clergy first began to attain favour through the patronage of Margaret, wife of Malcolm; and at last the seculars, possessing neither papal nor regal favour, suffered in the contest, both in Scotland and in other parts of Western Europe, and, after resisting for nearly two centuries, gradually lost both power and influence, as well as their possessions; and in the reign of Alexander III. (1245-1285), the order of Culdees seems to have become extinct. Still they continued long afterward to be held in reverence in many parts of the country. After this there occurred a great

INFLUX OF MONASTIC CLERGY

into Scotland during the reigns of Alexander I. (1107-1124), which increased during the reign of his successor and brother, David I. (1124-1153), when the canons of St. Augustine and St. Benedict settled in many richly endowed abbeys. Amongst other endowments,