

Our Contributors.

CHEAP AND MEAN.

BY KNOXONIAN

In his opening address as chairman of the Home Mission "Rally" which took place in New York the other week President Cleveland made a few practical remarks about the moral condition of some of the new towns and cities in the "wild and woolly West."

The President is a strong speaker. In fact strength is the main characteristic of his style as a speaker and writer. He knows perhaps as well as any man in America how to manage his matter in order to make a strong impression and he arranged it accordingly. His Venezuela message made a great sensation, but considered as a mere piece of literary work it does not rank with some of his former efforts. The subject was so interesting that he did not need to put any striking work on the message, in order to induce people to listen to what he had to say to congress.

Being a skilful speaker, the President knew instinctively that the right way to begin a Home Missionary meeting was to say something about the necessities of the field. As a business man he knew that there was no sense in asking the business men of New York for their share of a million dollars for Home Missions without telling them why the money was wanted, and what the Church proposed to do with it. So he gave a brief description of a frontier town with its saloons, gambling houses and other frontier institutions. It was a rather moderate description. Our Dr. Robertson could give one just as strong.

As soon as the President's little speech arrived in the West, a storm burst. A lot of men performed that peculiar operation called "standing up for the country." They seemed more concerned about standing up for the country than about standing up for the truth. They accused the President of "running down the country," especially that part of it which lies on the Pacific Ocean. Sensible people would have said "Well, there is too much truth in what the President has said. The worse we are the more we need Home Missionaries. Raise the million and send on more missionaries to make us better." But when did anybody ever do or say a sensible thing when he was trying to manufacture a little popularity or notoriety at the expense of truth?

There is a class of people in this world, and unfortunately some of them find their way into the Church, and even into the ministry, who are continually on the watch for a chance to make a little nasty popularity at the expense of any man who does his duty by telling unpalatable truths.

Some years ago a minister began an address at a Sabbath school anniversary by telling the boys that they should act respectfully towards people older than themselves. A few minutes before he had seen some of the boys snow-balling an elderly woman on the street. Naturally enough he said that Canadian and American boys were sometimes accused of lack of respect for superiors in age and position. As soon as the speaker took his seat a minister of another denomination got up and gave the boys a lot of "taffy," and then asked them to vote that they were just as good as any other boys. Of course they all voted yea, though it is to be hoped some of them had sense enough to see through the miserable attempt to manufacture a little transient popularity.

Not long ago a Sabbath school convention was being held in a locality we need not name. One of the speakers made the most common of common place remarks, that if parents would see that their children attended Sabbath school more regularly and prepared their lessons at home, the work would go on more successfully. As soon as the man who made this innocent observation took his seat, a minister of another denomination rose, struck a mock heroic attitude,

and with pumped up indignation said—"I hope that no attacks on the people are to be made here. I protest against these attacks on the people!"

Is there a half decent man in any other profession who would try to make popularity in that way? Would any respectable doctor? Any kind of a lawyer would scorn to do it. Are the meanest and most unprofessional practices in the country to be indulged in by ministers alone?

These little people who are forever "standing up" for big people and big causes that neither want nor thank them are becoming a nuisance. For the friend who stands faithfully by you when your back is to the wall ever cherish feelings of gratitude. Die if you have to, but never go back on that friend. The little fellow who is always "standing up for the country," or for the "Empire," or for the "flag," or for the "people," is a very different kind of man. He is a twin brother of the man who "stands up for the West," because President Cleveland said that some of the frontier towns are rather tough places. Don't we all know that is true?

SEEKING A CALL.—I.

BY WANDERER.

Having for some time past felt that the system at present in vogue in the Presbyterian Church for the settlement of pastors is far from satisfactory to all parties concerned, and, moreover, being at heart a loyal Presbyterian, the writer proposes, in the following sketches to attempt to give in a readable form some of the information, gleaned from various sources, regarding the trials of the man who is so unfortunate as to be "seeking a call." Our desire in so doing is to call the attention of the proper authorities to what many consider a grave defect in our Church organization. And lest there should be a slight misunderstanding on the part of any, we wish to assure all concerned that we have not attempted to describe in detail any one particular person or place. We entertain the highest respect for all our probationers, and sympathize deeply with them, although, like many others, we may speak of them at times as the men on "the merry go round." With this introduction we will ask our readers to accompany us to a prayer meeting in a vacant charge.

NOT A MODEL PRAYER MEETING.

One day in our wanderings we came to the thriving little town of Sand Hill, nicely situated in the midst of a good farming community. Although the town could not boast of more than fifteen hundred of a population, the number of separate churches and meeting houses was more than ten. It was Wednesday evening, and when the church bells began to ring, we enquired the way to the Presbyterian Church, and from the directions given we had no difficulty in finding the neat brick structure, in the basement of which quite a number of people had already gathered. In one corner, a little apart from the others, stood some five or six men earnestly conversing together in a loud whisper. It was easy to learn from the conversation that the congregation was at present without a settled minister, and the good people were taking this opportunity to discuss the merits of the different candidates, who had already preached for a call.

"We have fifty-four names on the list now, and it is scarcely two months since the pulpit was declared vacant," said one of the group, speaking a little louder than usual.

"Yes, we have names enough" was the rejoinder, "but thirty-three of that number are applications from settled ministers who would like to have a change."

"Aye! Aye!" said a third, "there are far too many of that kind now-a-days. A minister is no sooner nicely settled than he hears of some other place he would rather have, and he is willing to fit the next day."

"They are not all that bad surely. What do ye think, Davie?"

"Deed if a' maun tell the truth, a' ken quite a wheen o' them like that mase. Just take the names afore us th' noo. There is the Rev. Maplegrove and he has been in his present charge two years to the month, an' folk say that he doesna like his hoose, an' a' ken he wud be verraglad to come here for less stipen. Here again is Mr. Beechbill, who is noo i' his fourth charge an has three sturdy boys, and he wud like awfu' weel to come here for the sake o' oor big schule. A' cud easily gie ye the pedgree o' half o' the lot o' them, an' gie ye the reason as well why they want to settle amang us."

One man who had thus far remained silent, yawned, and stretched himself and then blurted out: "To change the subject a little, how did you like you man on Sabbath?"

"Very well, indeed," was the reply. "He has has a great voice you man, and did you notice how nimble he was on his pins? I tell you he will not wear a hole in the carpet in any one place, and then to see how he thumped the book was simply very little short of magnificent."

It was now past the hour for the service to begin, and one of the elders took charge, and in his opening prayer he described at length the kind of man the congregation wanted for the position. He was to be a man "fully qualified and sound in the faith; strong in body and in mind; a man young in years but old in wisdom." He was to be a man "of large intellect and great freedom of speech; a person who would draw the young people closely around him, and at the same time, be a leader and guide to whom the aged in the congregation could look up with confidence."

When the service was over, a prominent member complimented the leader of the meeting on his beautiful prayer, and added "that he hoped they would soon get such a minister as the elder had described?" We enquired what salary the congregation expected to pay, and ventured humbly to suggest that possibly such a man could be found in some of our large cities. We added moreover that the congregation would require to make out a very strong case, in order to persuade a man who now received five thousand dollars, to come to them for seven hundred and fifty and a manse. The conversation at this point was brought rather abruptly to a close, and all separated for the night.

THE ELDER-MODERATOR QUESTION.

BY A NEW TESTAMENT ELDER.

The Synod of Hamilton and London will be called on soon to deal with this question. As a member of the first Canadian Presbytery appointing an Elder-Moderator, and as one who has given some thought to the question, I would like, without attempting to discuss the letters of former correspondents, and at the risk of making again some points that have been already made, to restate the case as briefly as possible.

The question for the Synod is, whether the principle involved is of such importance, or the departure from the use and wont of the Church in such appointments, is of such serious import, as to call for special notice or censure. The question cannot be answered by appeal to the Rules and Forms of Procedure, for they were adopted, as is explicitly stated in the prefatory note, "as a useful guide . . . in the transaction of ecclesiastical business," which seems to imply that the inferior Church Court is to be the judge whether any of the rules may be suspended or departed from on occasion and for sufficient reason, subject, of course, to the review of the higher judiciary. Sec. 78, p. 21, "the Moderator is a minister," simply states what the use wont of the Church has been and is. It does not enact, or necessarily imply, that under no circumstances is a Presbytery at liberty to appoint, as its Moderator, an elder who is not also a minister. Which of the duties of the Moderator,

specified in Sec. 79, p. 21, is not competent to an elder, who has not been ordained to labor in word and doctrine. Many elders can lead in prayer, can preserve order, put motions, sign minutes, and even "instruct parties at the bar."

In the Form of Church Government, adopted by the General Assembly of the kirk of Scotland, Feb. 10th, 1645, the question is regarded as one of expediency. Referring to meetings of elders and deacons, it says, "It is most expedient that in these meetings one whose office is to labor in word and doctrine do moderate their proceedings." If in a session, then in a Presbytery certainly. It is doubtless "most expedient," as a rule, but the Form of Church Government wisely and rightly refrains from affirming it as "the law of the Church."

That every officer in the Church should have scope for the exercise of all their gifts, at the call of the Church, and that the Church should be able to avail itself of their services, in any position for which they are found to be qualified, will be generally admitted as sound principles. Presbyterian polity is as Scriptural as Presbyterian doctrine. The Scriptural principle of Church Government is "government by Presbyters, of the same order, meeting on equal terms, in local or larger Presbyteries." The details are involved in the principle, as much as a conclusion is involved in its premises. Neander says, "The idea of superior and inferior bishops is altogether inadmissible." That New Testament elders were of one order, Schaff says, "may be regarded as settled among scholars." It was the Council of Trent that first anathematized those who held that there is but one order of bishops in the New Testament, but its authority is not generally recognized by Presbyterians.

If, then, all elders are of the same order and equal rank, with (so-called) ministers, they have surely, ex-officio, a right to the exercise of all the functions of their office, for which they are found qualified, and to the exercise of which they are regularly called, by the Church Courts.

That the rule, requiring a Moderator to be a minister, is regarded as based on considerations of expediency is evident, from ch. iv., sec. 3, of the American Presbyterian Form of Government, which provides that the pastor, or some other minister, shall always be Moderator of session, "unless it is highly inconvenient." If Moderator of session, then, certainly of Presbytery. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church, which originated in a protest of Cumberland Presbytery against the arbitrary refusal of the Synod of Kentucky to allow the ordination of elders, who were judged by the Presbytery to be qualified to labor in word and doctrine, and to be urgently needed for its destitute home mission fields, and which is now a most vigorous branch of the great Presbyterian family, almost as large as our own, quite logically, elects Elder-Moderators, even of its higher Church Courts.

Elders have been eligible, by enactment, for appointment as Moderators of Presbytery, in the Southern Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., since 1885.

Those who may be regarded as authorities in our own church differ in their views, on this question, but it is encouraging to know that some of our college professors hold firmly by the simple Scriptural form of Church Government, and favor the full recognition of the rights of elders. The Principal of one of our colleges when appealed to wrote, "The Presbytery is on safe ground," i.e., in electing an Elder-Moderator. Another Principal wrote, "I quite approve of the action of your Presbytery. Custom is against you, but not law—so far as I know—and common sense is on your side. . . . And the law is common sense."

In view of the foregoing considerations, and others which might be urged, if there were space, it is to be hoped that Synods will hasten slowly in dealing with Presbyteries that have ventured, for good cause, to