

Our Contributors.

CONSERVING SEED AND SOWING

BY KNOXIAN.

The curtain rises for the second act. The head of the household sits on the front verandah after tea smoking his briar root contemplatively. The ladies of the family are arranging the flower beds beautifully. The head of the family pauses in his smoke, holds up his briar root and remarks in a tone of mingled dignity and appreciation: "What a fine flower garden we are making this spring."

By way of rest and variety one of the ladies talks with a neighbour lady across the garden fence. What are they talking about? Some wretched cynic, who gossips more in a corner grocery every day than all the respectable ladies in the neighbourhood do in a twelvemonth, will be sure to say they are talking about the neighbours. Perhaps one of them is telling the other that baby has got a new tooth. More likely they are talking about the seed they are planting in their gardens—perhaps about some bad seed that didn't turn out well. That is exactly what we are going to do in this paper. We are going to talk across the fence to the readers of THE PRESBYTERIAN about bad seed. Last week we had a chat about good seed. All seed, however, is not good.

THE SEED OF DISCORD

is very bad seed. Sometimes fiends in human form sow discord in the *family*. This is a vile act. There are dozens of men in the Kingston Penitentiary who would blush at the thought of sowing the seed of discord in a household. There are men *not* in the penitentiary, but who certainly ought to be, who think nothing of turning relatives against each other. This vile kind of sowing takes its worst form when husband and wife are set against each other. The creeping thing that can deliberately engage in such vile work should scarcely be allowed to live. Whether it would be right to lynch him or her is a nice question of morals that we do not now discuss, but certainly better people have been lynched. Never interfere in a family quarrel unless you are reasonably certain you can do some good. If you ever find yourself sowing the seed of discord in a family be absolutely certain you are on the high road to the bad place, and it will take something more than the Scott Act to keep you out.

Sowing the seed of discord among neighbours is a villainously bad kind of sowing. There are people, and the moment they move into a neighbourhood strife begins. Neighbours who were friendly and never said an unkind word for thirty years suddenly become estranged. Veteran settlers who used to borrow and lend in the early days, who lived like brothers, whose families grew up together, who helped each other over many a difficulty, who rejoiced at the marriages and mingled their tears at the funerals, suddenly begin to quarrel. They hardly know why. The neighbourhood has suddenly changed. The change has been made by the man or family that has moved in, and by whispering and gossiping, by running from house to house with loads of scandal and unloading at each fireside, has poisoned the community. A family of that kind are a greater scourge in a community than the potato bug or weevil. They are a greater pest than the rinderpest.

What should be said about the sin of sowing the seed of discord in congregations? A large proportion of the difficulties that arise in congregations, that disgrace religion, drive people out of the Church, stop the work of Christ, grieve the Holy Spirit and wound the Saviour in the house of His friends, may be traced directly to one man. Others are led in and induced to take sides, but one man begins the mischief and is primarily responsible for the damage done. The great majority of the Christian people of any congregation desire to live at peace. They would do so if they were let alone. They are dragged in by men who make them believe they are contending for principle, when they themselves often have a thousand times more principle than the man that drags them. Perhaps he merely wishes to pose as a leader, and call public attention to himself as a skillful ecclesiastical pugilist. Nobody might notice him if he were not in a fight of some kind. Or perhaps he merely wants to gratify his malice or satisfy his hate. So he uses the Church as a platform on which he can exhibit his

fighting powers, or give vent to his personal malice. While the fight goes on young people are driven into infidelity at the exhibition, some of them being the sons and daughters of the fighters. Deceitful people are driven out of the Church. God's people weep and all hell laughs. And the man who sowed the seed that leads to this fearful state of things always lays his hand on that portion of his anatomy where his heart is supposed to be and tells you he did it all from principle! He sowed the seed in the name of the Lord! He led his fellow members into strife that may exist long after he is dead; but he did it all for the glory of God and the good of the Church. No comments needed.

THE SEED OF IRREVERENCE

is very bad seed. Anything that leads the young to think or speak irreverently of God's day, God's house, God's worship, or God's Book is as deadly seed, as can be sown in the youthful mind. Reverence is not religion, but it is very closely allied to it. When reverence for sacred things and sacred persons goes, impiety and immorality are pretty certain to come in its place. When boys on their way home from the barracks of the Salvation Army sing snatches of hymns about our Saviour in the same spirit and to much the same air as they sing "Old Bob Ridly," we are old-fashioned enough to think these boys are having some very dangerous seed sown in their minds. When young people troop, giggling and snickering, into a so-called revival meeting and giggle and snicker while a preacher is speaking to them about God and Christ, heaven and hell, we are enough behind this age to think they would be better at home, if their parents are any better than they are. The seed sown by leprous newspapers is seed of the worst kind. The headings put by some of the Chicago journals to their reports of sermons should never be seen by a boy. Anything that lessens reverence for sacred things is bad seed.

THE SEED OF INFIDELITY

is very bad. We have all known cases in which one or two blatant infidels have poisoned a whole neighbourhood. They sowed the seed and it grew. Parents and guardians cannot be too careful about this matter. Never allow your children to be on intimate terms with a sceptic or scoffer. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred he will sow his seed directly or indirectly. The more refined and "nice" he is the more damage he can do. The best way to keep out bad seed is to fill the heart with good. A sack full of good grain has no room for tares.

EN ROUTE TO THE PACIFIC COAST.

CHICAGO—THE GARDEN CITY—ITS POPULATION—PREACHERS—CHURCHES, ETC.—REV. SAM JONES.

"The Star of Empire turns West," and a short visit to Chicago will convince one of the truth of the statement. Who has not heard of Chicago with its huge mercantile establishments, its manufactories, its famous corn exchange and the palatial residences of its merchant princes? In the year 1800 the site of this great city was a swamp; forty years afterward it was incorporated as a city, with over 5,000 inhabitants and to-day it has a population of 600,000; fully one-half of which are of foreign birth. There are about 50,000 Irish, 6,000 coloured people, about 400 Chinese, and 15,000 Canadians. Chicago is situated on Lake Michigan and is about 2,500 miles from San Francisco.

The buildings are large, ornamental and substantial, and in every way worthy of the people and the place. Prominent among the large buildings are the city hall and court house, said to be the most extensive and elaborate buildings devoted to county and municipal purposes in the world, a statement which I think myself should cover the whole ground until the Toronto court house and city hall be completed which, I hope, will eclipse even Chicago, whose buildings have cost over four and a half millions of dollars.

Chicago is justly proud of her water works system, and has spared neither trouble nor expense to perfect this department of municipal work, even to the turning of the stream of the Chicago River, and making it run out of Lake Michigan into the Illinois and Michigan Canal and thence to the Mississippi. In a place of such burning thirst good water is of great value. It is said there are 4,000 saloons in Chicago; whether this is true or not I cannot say, but a stranger

passing along the streets almost at every step is painfully reminded of the unbridled sway of the liquor traffic and places of so-called amusement; all of them open on Sunday to the great hurt of morality and religion. So serious have matters become that Christian people are getting nervous as to the results. According to statistics given by Dr. Kittredge, to whom reference will again be made, in his sermon bearing on Home Mission work, it appears that licenses, saloons, vice and crime were being multiplied by large percentages whilst that of religious growth and Christian progress here was very small—I think only five per cent., and unless a change comes quickly the outlook for Chicago is rather cloudy from a religious point of view.

I was informed that Mr. Moody was approached on the subject of making Chicago his future field of labour, and that his reply gave some ground for encouragement to the Christian workers there. He proposed that they raise \$250,000, of which sum \$100,000 would be spent in erecting a building where meetings would be held, and which at the same time would afford accommodation for about 100 missionaries selected not from the ministerial ranks, but from the ranks of earnest Christian laymen, and the balance, \$150,000, to be invested toward the support of these missionaries. The project was favourably received, and I understand a start has been made.

SUNDAY

is wholly disregarded; saloons and theatres are open; street cars are run as on any other day of the week; and the city generally assumes a holiday appearance. In spite of heavy rain and slushy streets and a keen March wind, which pierced to the inmost nerves, and at times threatened to shatter the fragile framework of the descendants of old Adam, there was a fair congregation assembled in the Third Presbyterian Church, of which the Rev. Abbott E. Kittredge, D.D., is pastor, and the Rev. William Post, D.D., assistant pastor. This congregation has had a rather chequered career. It was organized in 1847, and up till 1870 had the advantage of listening to six pastors in rapid succession. On the 13th June, 1870, the present pastor was installed, when matters evidently took a turn for the better. A new church was erected and in May, 1878, opened for worship, while in October following it was destroyed by fire. The congregation, nothing discouraged, commenced to build again, and at present occupies one of the handsomest church edifices to be found in any city.

The congregation has grown to be a large one, having 2,300 members, and the church is crowded at every diet of worship. Strangers are accommodated with seats on chairs and benches in the back of the church until after the introductory exercises when they are escorted to vacant pews. As the day was very severe there was ample room, and immediately after the opening invocation the pastor requested that all strangers should be accommodated with seats at once.

The choir is composed of two female and two male singers, and although few in number the music is nothing the worse, the preacher standing and singing and the whole congregation joining heartily. The first Scripture lesson is read together, and before the sermon the Apostles' Creed is repeated, the minister leading. Such a proceeding does nobody any harm, but I could see no use in reaffirming our belief in the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion on such occasions.

REV. DR. KITTREDGE

is a short, stout built man, with an animated countenance and heavy, dark hair, neatly brushed, and slightly tinged with gray. He wears glasses. He was born in Massachusetts, and is in his fifty-second year. His first charge was in Charlestown in his native State, where he laboured for four years. He was then called to Memorial Church, New York, where he remained six years, after which he came to Chicago, and at present is the minister of the *third largest* congregation in the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and from which has sprung three other congregations.

Dr. Kittredge has had a successful career, and may not yet have touched the height of his popularity. He receives a salary of \$7,500, and I understand that overtures were lately made to him to go further West at an increase of salary. He is a vigorous, eloquent preacher, and his sermons bear the stamp of careful preparation, and are often published; one sermon