

## HAMILTON NOTES.

The Knights of Pythias attended divine service in Erskine church on Sabbath evening, the 24th inst.

M. S. Melvin, B.A., of Knox College, has received an invitation from the Chalmers' congregation on the Mountain Top to preach for them during the present College session.

S. H. Pickup, B.A., of the Knox College graduating class, preached with great acceptance on the 17th inst. in St. Andrew's church. Mr. Wilson, the pastor, was absent conducting anniversary services at First Essa, Barrie Presbytery.

Church fairs, sales of work, etc., seem to be the order of the day at present. All hail to the noble army of women who thus show their enthusiasm in the church's work; but oh, for the time when we shall all have learned that there is "a more excellent way."

Rev. S. B. Nelson, D.D., of Knox church, has been approached by a strong church in Minneapolis with a view to accepting a call from there. It is hoped that Dr. Nelson may not leave Hamilton so soon, though humanly speaking the inducements offered present a great temptation.

## EASTERN ONTARIO.

The induction of the Rev. J. A. G. Stirling to the pastorate of the Presbyterian church at Havelock, took place on the afternoon of Friday, 22nd November, at 2.30 p.m. The Rev. G. A. MacLennan, B. A., of Norwood, interim moderator, presided. The sermon was preached by the Rev. Peter Currie, B.A., of Warsaw. The address to the people was given by Rev. D. A. Thomson, of Hastings, Clerk of the Presbytery of Peterborough, and the address to the minister was delivered by the Rev. H. J. Keith, B. D., of Knox church, Peterborough. There was a large attendance of the congregation. Later on in the afternoon a sumptuous dinner was provided by the ladies in the basement of the town hall to which the fullest justice was done by a great concourse of people, both from the town and the adjacent country districts. In the evening there was a largely attended social gathering in the same place at which addresses were given by the aforesaid members of presbytery. Addresses were also given by the Rev. D. Balfour of the Methodist church and the Rev. H. Caplan, rector of the Church of England. An appropriate address was also given by the newly inducted minister. The evening's enjoyment was much enhanced by a select musical programme. Havelock is entirely a town charge, and affords an abundant field for ministerial usefulness.

At the last meeting of the Toronto Presbytery, Dr. Summerville submitted a plan for the settlement of vacant charges, of which the principle idea was the appointment of a central committee appointed by the general assembly to receive names of ministers out of charge who wish settlement in charges and all ministers in charge who desire a change. A presbytery committee of supply should act with the session of vacant charges to select and invite the ministers who are deemed suitable to preach there with a view to a call.

On the evening of the 14th inst, the minister, Rev. W. G. Wilson, and choir of St. Andrew's church, Guelph, were hospitably entertained by Mrs. J. Smith, of Arthur street.

Rev. Dr. E. D. McLaren, Mission Secretary, says the partial failure of crops in the West will affect the home mission funds.

## "UNTO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION."

"One can not be, with impunity, the son of a drunkard"—so says Dr. A. Joffroy, a French Physician, who writes on "Alcohol and Alcoholism" in the Revue Scientifique. Dr. Joffroy's article reads in places like an old-fashioned temperance tract, but it is in reality a pitiless scientific statement of facts. Diseases, the author points out, are of two kinds, those that attack persons in normal health, and those that touch only those who are predisposed to them. To create such morbid predispositions alcohol is eminently suited, and in this way it strikes down not only those who abuse it, but their descendants, often ceasing its ravages only when it has obliterated a whole family. We can quote here only a small part of what Dr. Joffroy says. First comes his division of diseases into the two categories mentioned above. We read:

"In the case of some diseases (scarlet fever, smallpox, plague, etc.) the pathogenic agent produces the specific malady in every one exposed to contagion, whatever may have been his previous condition of health. But, on the other hand, there is a whole class of diseases that attack only such as are predisposed. Of one hundred infants fed in the same way, one or two will become abnormally fat, because, for example, the father had gout or the mother diabetes. . . .

"But hereditary predisposition exists also with nervous diseases, and alcoholism is one of the most effective means of creating such predisposition, as well as of developing it where it exists. To have chorea or rheumatism, for instance, one must have obese, nervous, alcoholic parents. A man may be seized with shaking palsy, following some violent emotion . . . but heredity must be present to facilitate the action, and alcoholism is generally found to be at the bottom of this heredity."

In mental diseases, Dr. Joffroy goes on to say, the role of heredity is greater still. We may almost say that predisposition is absolutely necessary for these. The author rejects the classification made by some authors who divide mental diseases into those of the normal and abnormal brain. The former, he thinks, do not exist, a diseased brain being always abnormal. Even poisons that act on the brain select those who are predisposed, and this is eminently true of alcohol itself. Predispositions (generally alcoholic) determine the special form of drunkenness and explain why wine makes one man gay, another sad, another quarrelsome. Likewise, hereditary predisposition explains why alcoholism results, with one man, in an ulcer of the stomach, with another in cirrhosis of the liver, with others in paralysis of one or another set of nerves. The writer continues:

"On epilepsy the action of alcohol is quite clearly manifest; sometimes a subject plainly epileptic from infancy takes to drink at about twenty, with the result that his attacks increase in violence at each excess; sometimes a man of thirty to forty years who has had only slight seizures in childhood begins to have the characteristic attacks, which disappear or lessen when he becomes abstinent. . . .

"In order that I may be clearly understood I will repeat the definition that I have given elsewhere of incipient degeneracy: 'The totality of organic defects, of hereditary or acquired origin, which, by lessening organic resistance, create new morbid aptitudes and make causes pathogenic when of themselves they would be powerless to injure a normal organism.'

"And I repeat again that, in the creation of these new morbid aptitudes, this hereditary predisposition, which

dominates almost all pathology, alcoholism stands preeminent, doing more harm and counting more victims than tuberculosis. Alcoholism, in fact, not only affects the individual, but its effects are continued to his descendants. One can not be, with impunity, the son of an alcoholic. Alcoholism begins with the father and strikes down his children; and generally its action continues, until, in the fourth or fifth generation, it has destroyed the family. But before this final result is reached, the alcoholics and their descendants are, according to circumstances, hurled into disease, madness, or crime, filling our hospitals, asylums, and jails, as I have already said.

"Blind indeed are those who, ignorant of the dangers of alcohol, see in it only a source of revenue!"

## THE AGENCY USED.

By C. H. Wetherbe.

Although God often makes known His will to His people by the express agency or work of the Holy Spirit, yet He also very generally conveys His desires and purposes through a purely human agency. But the latter way is often regarded by even good people with considerable doubt and reluctance. I have known many instances of this kind. God had undoubtedly revealed His mind to a certain Christian man in reference to a situation which required more than human wisdom to decide correctly, or according to God's will; but his wife, although a Christian, refused to accept the revelation or decision, on the ground that it was a man, and not God, who was speaking. She argued that God would directly make known to her what His will was in relation to the matter, if it were right for her to follow her husband in the proposed course. But there is a fallacy in such an argument and attitude. As a general principle it is both wrong and unsafe. It was on just such a principle that a large number of Jews, in Old Testament times, acted towards God's true prophets. They frequently refused to practically heed the message which the prophets declared that God had given to them in behalf of the people. They stoutly declared that God had not spoken thus to the prophet. If God had directly spoken to those Jews, then they would have felt obliged to heed and obey.

But God would not humiliate the demand of those people. He had expressly chosen certain men as His prophets and His agents for conveying to the people His will and demands, and if they would not receive the message they must suffer chastisement and loss. We may admit that a true Christian man in our day may sometimes be mistaken in his belief that it was God who spoke to him in regard to a certain affair, yet it remains true that God employs human agencies for the conveyance of His will and word in regard to many of the affairs of our lives. We should not refuse to heed a message, simply because it comes to us through a human voice.

Lutheran Observer: Men see a wonderful promise of gain in yielding to temptation but they find out, sooner or later, as the prodigal did, that its pleasure is illusion, delirium, falsehood, leaving only bitterness and ruin. No solid, enduring happiness grows beyond the hedges of righteousness. He who thinks it is to be found there and breaks through, hoping to grasp it, is forced at last to confess that he has played the fool. In incurring guilt, he has also tasted the bitterness of utter disappointment.

Chalmers' Church, Hamilton, have invited Mr. Gordon Melvin, a Knox College student, to take charge of the church for a term.