

Our Contributors.

WORK, BUT BLOW NO HORN.

BY KNOXIAN.

The Assembly meeting closed a peaceful and prosperous Church year. Fair progress has been made on most lines and more than fair on some. Dr. Gray, the delegate from the Old Kirk, and a splendid specimen of the Scotch minister he is, told the Assembly that he was perfectly astonished at the progress made by the Church since the Union of '75. Our Home Mission field seemed to bewilder him, and well it might. A man who has spent all his days on the tight little island called Great Britain, or on the neighbouring island called Ireland, can hardly realize what is meant by a mission field four thousand miles long.

The meeting of the Pan-Presbyterian Council is near. No doubt the visitors will tell us we are a great Church, making astonishing progress, etc., etc. Knowing that colonists have a weakness for saying to European dignitaries, "What do you think of us," in a tone that means "praise us a little," some of the continental divines may be tempted to give us a little ecclesiastical taffy. If they do, some of us will be sure to blow our horn. Now, while there is much to be thankful for, there is positively nothing to blow about. It is quite true that the Church is making progress, but not as much as it ought to make. Substantial work is being done, but considering the number of workers and their opportunities, much more might be done. Progress is a relative term, and we are strongly of the opinion that the old settlers who started new congregations in the woods, and built churches with their own hands, made, in proportion to their means and opportunities, just as much progress as the Church is making now. Possibly they made more.

Home Mission work ought to be our forte. If there is just one thing this Church ought to do supremely well that one thing is Home Mission work. Why? Because we have been doing it from the beginning and have it right under our own eye all the time. Now, does the Church do any more Home Mission work in proportion to its means and opportunities or do it any better than it did years ago? Of course there is more work done, but there are more men and more money to do it, and the men can get at their work now much easier than they could in the early days. The Northern Railway was built to Barrie in '51, if we rightly remember, and the Great Western to London in '53. Prior to these dates every minister and Home Missionary in Ontario had to travel to his work by stage, or on horseback, or on foot, or any other way he could. Long after these dates no railway ran near many of our mission fields. The first missionary to Red River travelled in an ox cart from St. Paul. We don't know how Dr. Bryce travelled to Fort Garry in '71, but we know he did not get there by rail. How is it now? From Metis to the Pacific a Home Mission worker can get fairly near his field by rail or boat. Of course there are exceptional cases, but the general fact is that it is comparatively easy now to get to any of our Home fields.

Now look at the supply of workers. Twenty or thirty years ago it was almost impossible to get a sufficient number of preachers in summer, and nobody thought of getting them in winter. We well remember when the Conveners used to come to Knox College days before the session closed and hunt up men for their fields. Dr. A. D. McDonald was the representative Home Mission man for Huron and Bruce in those days, and what he did not know about the art of getting good students was not worth knowing. Now the supply is quite equal to the demand every spring.

Dr. Cochrane wound up his capital Home Mission speech in the Assembly by a fine peroration on the total sum given for Home Missions in the Western Section—\$112,000. Being a business man, a man of affairs, the eloquent Doctor was careful not to say that the total was *proportionately* larger than the total given the first or any other year that he was Convener. Dr. Cochrane is not lacking in courage, but we venture to say that he has not nerve enough to undertake to show that our giving even for Home Mission work is increasing any faster than our wealth and members. We strongly incline to the opinion that he would say the total given is certainly larger, but the number of givers is also larger and the purse from which the gifts come is larger, too.

The average graduate of our theological halls ought to be at least seventy-five per cent. better than the average graduate of twenty-five or thirty years ago. Why? Because he has better opportunities. During these years the entire educational machinery of the country has been improved. Compare the public and high schools and universities of to-day with these institutions as they existed a quarter of a century ago and one can easily see the reason why.

Years ago we gently hinted that anybody with a weakness for comparisons might have this corner of THE PRESBYTERIAN to show that our people have grown in liberality in the matter of church building. The point was that the old log or frame church built by our fathers represented proportionately more money, more self-denial, more self-sacrifice, than is represented by the best Church in any of our cities. The hint was not taken. It never will be taken by any man of sense because every man of sense knows that the early settlers had to exert themselves much more to provide places of worship than we exert ourselves now. Many of them worked with their own hands, and paid their last dollar, when

dollars were few, and they succeeded so admirably that in some cases their sons have not spent a dollar in church building for thirty years.

There is grave reason to doubt whether any considerable advance has been made in the matter of stipends. The totals are larger in many cases, but that proves nothing. There are more people to pay and more money to pay with. Instances might easily be given in which both people and money have increased, but the stipend has remained the same.

The root question is not, is the Church making progress, but is the Church making *proportionate* progress? Increased totals do not answer that question. Some of the totals are not specially encouraging. In ten years the number of Presbyterians in the Maritime Provinces decreased 6548. So the census enumerators say. The financial report shows that the total sum raised last year is not much, if anything, larger than the total raised in '89. Looking over the Church as a whole, there is little to discourage, much to encourage, and much to be thankful for.

Moral.—Do your duty, but blow no horn.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

BY PROF. F. R. BEATTIE, OF COLUMBIA SEMINARY.

A short account of the proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, South, for the current year may be of interest to some of your readers, and this article is written to give Presbyterians in Canada some information in regard to what the Southern branch of Presbyterianism is doing to advance the interests of Christ's kingdom in the earth.

The Assembly of 1892 met at Hot Springs, Arkansas, a point further west than ever before visited by the Assembly. Hot Springs is a short distance south-west of Little Rock, and is noted as a watering place and health resort. There are many mineral springs there, and splendid accommodation for visitors who wish the benefit of the waters.

The Assembly convened at 11 a. m. on Thursday, the 19th of May, and in the absence of Dr. H. C. Dubose in China, the Moderator of last year, the opening sermon was preached by Dr. T. D. Witherspoon, of Kentucky. The Court continued in session till Saturday, May 28, and considered many important matters. There was an excellent spirit prevailing in the Assembly, and almost every day a sermon was preached. The people of Hot Springs entertained the Assembly most hospitably, and the arrangements were all excellent.

There were about one hundred and sixty members present. Compared with the Canadian Assembly, this seems a small number, but it is to be remembered that the principle of representation is different. Instead of one in four, as in Canada, it is one in twenty-four. A Presbytery, therefore, with twenty-four, or fewer, ministers on its roll sends one minister and one ruling elder. There are in all seventy-three Presbyteries, and only about one-third of these are entitled to send more than one minister and one elder. This matter of representation is a difficult one to determine wisely. A very large body, such as the Canadian Assembly, with its one-fourth representation, or such as the Assembly of the Northern Church, with the same representation as the South—one in twenty-four—is expensive, and rather unwieldy as a deliberative body. On the other hand, the stimulus received by the attendance upon the Assembly is limited to a few, when the representation is small, and some perhaps serve the Church many years and never are sent to the Assembly at all. Perhaps in a Church the size of the Canadian or Southern Churches—and they are almost the same in strength—about one in twelve would be the best representation to have for all purposes.

Dr. S. A. King, of Texas, a pioneer in mission work in that great and growing State, was made Moderator, and Dr. J. R. Wilson, the veteran stated Clerk, was at his post, and the Assembly was soon ready for business.

In general, the condition of the Church and the state of the various branches of her work were found full of encouragement. A year of peaceful, diligent work had been passed, and there were marks of advance in every department of the field. The following are some of the matters which received attention by the Assembly:—

At an early stage of the work of the Seaman's Bethel at New Orleans, the interests of the American Tract Society and the work of the Bible Society received attention, and were commended by the Assembly.

The reports of Theological Seminaries, including that of Tuscaloosa Institute, a theological school for training coloured ministers, were found to be such as to show increased prosperity in this branch of the Church's work. The two regular seminaries which reported to the Assembly were Union, Va., and Columbia, S.C. Both show an increasing attendance of students, and are adding to their teaching staff and equipment. Theological work in connection with college work is done at other points: Clarksville, Tenn., Richmond, Ky., Batesville, Ark., and Austin, Texas. The Assembly directed that these schools should all report regularly to the General Assembly. This seems eminently proper, as it gives the Assembly an oversight of all the work in this field, and places all theological schools in the same relation to the Church and General Assembly.

The report on Foreign Missions was excellent. The contributions for the year were about \$130,000, an increase of \$17,000 over last, or any former, year. Several missionaries

have died during the year, but twenty-two have been sent out, and others are under appointment to go very soon. Over one hundred missionaries, besides native helpers, are employed, and the work is constantly enlarging. The headquarters of the Foreign-Mission Committee are at Nashville, Tenn., and Dr. Houston is the secretary in charge there.

The Home Mission report indicated progress. Nearly \$100,000 was raised for this purpose, as reported to the Assembly. This does not fully represent what is done by the Church, because many Presbyteries do not send all their contributions to the Assembly's Committee, but keep the larger part to be expended on work within their own bounds. On this account there are two plans pursued—one by the Assembly and the other by Presbyteries—and entire co-operation with the Assembly's Committee does not obtain. The entire amount expended on Home Mission work in both ways must be at least \$150,000. The headquarters of this work are at Atlanta, Ga., and it is in charge of Dr. Craig as secretary. The field is wide and needy, and men are urgently required to enter on the work. The advance of the South, and its increase in population everywhere, lays a great responsibility on the Church to overtake the destitution.

Earnest attention was given to the interests of the coloured people, of whom there are over 7,000,000 in the Southern States. Rev. A. L. Phillips is in charge of this work, and is pushing it with energy in various ways. The Assembly calls for \$20,000 for this work, and a plan to establish a separate Synod of the Presbyteries of coloured people, under the care and aid of the Assembly, is under consideration, with good prospects of solving the serious difficulties connected with this subject. The committee having this work in hand is located at Birmingham, Alabama.

The question of the education of candidates for the ministry, and of the requirements of licensure, was debated at great length. The main points discussed were the plan of giving financial aid to students and the time and conditions of licensure. These questions were fully discussed, but no substantial change was made. For education the Assembly calls for \$30,000, which gives each candidate about \$100 a year to aid him in preparation. Licensure, if desired, may be obtained after two years in seminary. Memphis, Tenn., is the location of the committee in charge of this subject, and Dr. Richardson is secretary.

The work of the Committee on Publication was considered. Dr. Hazen has charge of this work, and the Publishing House is situated at Richmond, Va. During recent years this branch of the Church's work has been very prosperous. A Book Room, a Publishing House and Colportage work are conducted by this committee, and the whole undertaking is a real service to the Church. Books, Sunday School Helps and Papers are published, a large stock of books are kept on sale, and the assets are now nearly \$100,000 and increasing.

Various other matters were considered, but they can only be named. The directory of worship was remitted to a committee to report to next Assembly. Strong resolutions were passed regarding the Sabbath; the matter of communion wine was discussed; only one judicial case came up, and was soon settled; a committee was appointed to consider the Church Hymn-Book; commissioners were appointed to attend the meeting of the Alliance in Toronto in September, and the next meeting was appointed to be held in Macon, Ga., at the usual time in May, 1893.

From the reports which had come to hand, indicating the condition of the Church and her work, there are many reasons for gratitude to the Head of the Church, who alone can give real prosperity, and for encouragement to increased zeal and liberality in seeking to advance the Master's work. May the Lord give peace and prosperity to our Zion for the years to come.

Columbia, S.C.

DOWN THE CARIBBEAN.

BY REV. JOHN MACKIE, M.A.

XII.—COUVA: TRINIDAD: ST. JOSEPH.

Leaving Princes Town by train we proceeded westward, through the hilly country of Victoria, till we connect with the main line from Port-of-Spain to San Fernando, when we travel northward to visit our mission stations in division called St. George, and inland from Port-of-Spain. To do this, we must needs go through Caroni. Towards the south of this central division is the straggling town of Couva, an Indian settlement, on a stream of that name. We see, as we pass, the church where our new missionary, Mr. Coffin, officiates, with the school as usual adjoining. Beautiful high hills rise behind the village, on the summit of the highest of which is a Roman church, whose principal ornament within is a life-sized negress virgin with a negro child in her arms. The priest is not particularly proud of it, though like his clan not very careful about facts in such matters; but it was a gift and he must not show his dislike of it. Besides the idea is by no means novel, for answering the description in Canticles, "I am black but comely." There were many black images of the Virgin in the churches of Spain and Italy more than a thousand years ago. Mr. Coffin's diocese is large, and he has made an excellent beginning, and a good impression on his fellow-ministers. We regretted to be so near him and yet not see him. He has a communion roll of nearly sixty, and eight schools in different localities where nearly 400 children are receiving a Christian education, and