

Our Contributors.

CONCERNING EXTEMPORANEOUS HEARING.

BY KNOXIAN.

In acknowledging a vote of thanks for his famous lecture on the modern sermon, Dr. Parker said that the modern hearer needed instruction quite as much as the modern preacher. There were extemporaneous hearers as well as extemporaneous preachers.

Dr. Parker is right and to the point as he nearly always is. Extemporaneous preachers are bad enough and there are too many of them, but extemporaneous hearers are equally bad and they swarm like grasshoppers in a Kansas cornfield.

What is an extemporaneous preacher? Strictly speaking an extemporaneous preacher is one who makes his sermon as he delivers it. He speaks on the spur of the moment without previous preparation of any kind. The term is not always used in this strict sense, for men who prepare their matter most carefully but do not commit their words are often called extemporaneous preachers. John Hall, for example, is called an extemporaneous preacher. He is nothing of the kind. His rule is to write carefully but never to burden his mind with the words he has written. In the strict sense of the word an extemporaneous preacher is the clever man who makes his introduction, divisions, discussion, illustrations, arguments, appeals and everything else after he has entered the pulpit. Perhaps he selects his text in the pulpit, too. There is no reason why he should not. To an ordinary man the selection of a text in the pulpit would be much easier than the preparation of a sermon there. But the extemporaneous preacher is no ordinary man. He is far and away smarter than the Methodist preacher who arose one morning and prepared seventeen sermons before breakfast. The extemporaneous preacher does not need to rise before breakfast and make sermons. Adopting the method of a famous American the extemporaneous preacher, if he has sermons to make before breakfast, always takes his breakfast first and leaves the sermons until he enters the pulpit.

The peculiarity of the extemporaneous preacher is that he pays no attention to a sermon before delivery. The peculiarity of the extemporaneous hearer is that he pays no attention to sermons after their delivery. He may hear well enough while the sermon is being preached but he gives himself no more concern about it afterwards than the extemporaneous preacher gives himself about his sermonic effort a month before he inflicts it upon his long-suffering congregation. Up to the point of preaching the extemporaneous brother gives himself no concern; after the point of hearing the extemporaneous hearer gives himself no concern. The two are so much alike that neither one can afford to lecture the other on his bad habits, though as a rule it will be found that the extemporaneous preacher often does lecture the extemporaneous hearer. If the extemporaneous hearer could speak back he might perhaps say that a sermon that was not worth any consideration before delivery was not worth much afterwards. In so saying he might not be as far astray as some good people imagine. If a preacher does not think enough of his pulpit work to give it some thought beforehand he can hardly blame his hearers if they don't give it much thought afterwards.

Extemporaneous hearers, however, are not all seated around extemporaneous pulpits. You find them everywhere. No doubt Dr. Parker has a good many himself. So has every minister, no matter how painstaking and conscientious he may be in the preparation of his sermons.

Here is a man who listens with much interest to a sermon on missions. As the preacher goes on making one good point after another he begins to think that he has not done his whole duty by the missionary work of his Church. It dawns upon his mind that the work in the North-West is most important. He sees points in foreign mission work that he never saw before. The reflex influence of mission work is a matter that escaped his attention. He partly believes now that the more a congregation does for others the more it can do for itself. Sermon over, the good man goes home and thinks little or nothing more about it. He was an extemporaneous hearer. He paid as little attention to the sermon after delivery as some extemporaneous preachers do before delivery.

Here is a parishioner who occasionally indulges in beverages stronger than tea. He may not drink much liquor but he always knows where it is. He listens to a sensible sermon on temperance—all temperance sermons are not sensible—and he wonders whether after all it would not be better for the sake of his family and for the sake of his example on others to shut down on the use of liquor. By the time the sermon is over he about concludes he will become a total abstainer. He goes home and practically decides that he will not. He was an extemporaneous hearer.

This good man has never done much in the way of giving. Giving was always a tender point with him. It is a tender point with many. The pocket is the most sensitive organ of the human frame. This man we speak of belongs to the class who cannot be much blamed for not being liberal givers. He never was taught any better. One day as he listened to a good sermon on Christian liberality he resolved to turn a new leaf. He almost concludes he will double his contribution to every good cause. The sermon ends, he goes home, cools down and continues giving just the sums he gave before. He is an extemporaneous hearer.

This other parishioner attends Church very irregularly. The only thing certain about him is that he will not be in Church every Sabbath. He hears a good sermon on public worship and concludes while hearing to mend his ways. Next Sabbath morning his pew is empty. His bed isn't. He was an extemporaneous hearer—very extemporaneous.

In fact every hearer who does not try to practice what he resolves in church on Sabbath is an extemporaneous hearer.

Now let those good people who blaze away at preachers for not preparing their sermons properly or not preparing them at all turn their guns occasionally on extemporaneous hearers. We have not one word to say for the lazy preacher, or the presumptuous preacher, or the conceited preacher. To these three classes belong nearly all the extempore brethren. Not a word have we to say for them—not a word. But let British fair-play prevail. Extemporaneous hearers should receive a little attention betimes as well as extemporaneous preachers.

There are two particularly saddening kinds of extemporaneous hearers that have not been noticed. One is the unconverted hearer who seems to be deeply impressed with the truth as long as he is hearing it, but as soon as the service is over he feels no more. His serious impressions last just as long as the sermon lasts and no longer.

The other is the hearer who is perhaps converted, and while under the influence of powerful truth resolves to be a better man and more useful Christian. No doubt he means for the time being all he says. He is earnest enough while the heat lasts. But for some reason or another he never becomes the kind of man you expect, perhaps indeed not the kind of man he himself expected. He is an extemporaneous hearer of the most discouraging kind.

Once again let us repeat Dr. Parker's words. There is extemporaneous hearing as well as extemporaneous preaching, and let us make war upon both.

OUR FRENCH WORK.

BY-WAY JOTTINGS IN MONTREAL.

At the last meeting of Montreal Presbytery, Rev. G. C. Heine, Convener of the Committee on French Evangelization, presented an interesting report showing encouraging progress in this department of missionary effort. Incidents like the following show the kind of work our French missionaries and colporteurs are doing and should call forth the sympathy and prayers of the Church. One of the colporteurs in his report for September, says: "I read the Bible to eighty-six Roman Catholic families and prayed with many of them. Some thought that we Protestants did not pray. Nearly every one was glad to hear me. Some good seed was sown. I pray God for its growth and to take away from the people the fear of the world."

Again: "I visited many times a sick boy that I knew at Notre Dame Hospital. During my last visit I spoke of the only way of salvation, through Christ, to a sick man, a Roman Catholic, whose bed was near the boys. He thanked me for the good words I spoke to him. I will return and see him again and if it be God's will that he get better I will see him at his house." And again: "In the same hospital was a Protestant Englishman. He was very lonesome. He could not speak French and those beside him could not speak English. I gave him a Bible. He stayed about five weeks. He is now in the United States."

The new church of Lacroix in the east end is a very comfortable and attractive little building with school attached. Regular morning and evening service and Sabbath school are held. Pastor Duclos is meeting with much encouragement in his work. The day school is in a flourishing state and is at present taught by Mr. T. R. Bouchard.

Pastor Morin's efforts in St. John's Church (Russell Hall) are not without good results. He has associated with him some good workers. Speaking of his work for October, he says: "On the whole the work of St. John's has been encouraging during October—more so than for the corresponding month last year. The meetings have been well attended, and I have come in contact with more Roman Catholics well disposed and willing to take a Bible and read it. If all the interesting occurrences with the work were related it would fill pages. Four new members have been received during the month and on Sabbath, the 12th, seventy-five sat down at the Lord's table."

There are two day schools, one French and the other Italian, in connection with the Church, taught by efficient teachers, Miss Hislop and Miss Internoscia. For thirteen years the Rev. A. Internoscia has preached to an Italian congregation at five p.m., every Sunday in this Church. This devoted man is doing a good work among his fellow-countrymen in the city. He says that he thinks that it is about time that something were done towards providing a place in which he and his people might meet to worship God at a more seasonable hour. And truly it is. It ought to be added that St. John's congregation are taking preliminary steps towards the erection of a new church next spring on the present site.

Efforts are being made to secure a suitable missionary for Canning Street (St. Sauveur) Church. The Rev. J. Allard, a graduate of Montreal Presbyterian College and at present pastor of the French Church at Fall River, Mass., is expected for the 16th and following Sabbath. All who know Mr. Allard would rejoice at his return to work in his native province should he see the way open to do so.

At the last meeting of the Executive of the Board of French Evangelization there was read an extract minute of the

General Assembly regarding a memorial petition with reference to a French Presbyterian school in Quebec wherein the General Assembly was asked to "Commend the claims of the institution to a larger measure of support to the members of the Church and to appoint one of its members a trustee of the said school." The Assembly did not grant the prayer of the memorial but referred the matter to the Board of French Evangelization, with instructions to report at the next Assembly, with a view to guide the Board at its meeting in March in forming a recommendation to next General Assembly. The Executive agreed to appoint a committee, consisting of Prof. Scrimger, Mr. Fleck and the secretary, to make enquiry and gain all requisite information.

SKETCHES OF TRAVEL IN EUROPE.

BY REV. E. WALLACE WAITS, D.S.C., OF KNOX CHURCH, OWEN SOUND.

CAMBRIDGE.

Most cities of fame possess something distinctive and peculiar, on which that fame rests. It may be climate or architecture or a peal of church bells or the tones of an organ, or ancient paintings, or splendid streets, or smokeless air, or far-stretching prospects over land and sea; or it may be institutions, or colleges, or trade, with her wharves, ships and warehouses. Or a city may be famous for its ruins, and may be living on the fame of ages long gone by. It is to Cambridge we first direct attention, being the first point of interest to us. The ties of country are ever strong, and neither distance nor time can destroy them. In our birth-place lies a magnet for our hearts. Here we were born, and received our early education. Cambridge is indeed a benign mother to us. Having reached Liverpool on a fine Sabbath morning in July, we proceeded at once, per Midland Railway, to this ancient seat of learning, passing through a most picturesque and beautiful country on the way. No nobler scenery is to be found in England than that which belongs to the Derbyshire district; Mattock, Bath, Miller's Dale and Monsal Dale are each specific in their character, and all-embracing in their beauty.

Whether Cambridge or Oxford was of the greater antiquity was a matter which, down to the close of the last century, greatly exercised the minds of university men. At the present day the impression that Oxford is the elder university is so generally prevalent that it would be vain to attempt to counteract it. Yet, although Cambridge cannot boast of any colleges founded by King Alfred, and has long disregarded the fable of "Cantaber," a Spaniard, three hundred and seventy-five years before the birth of our Saviour, "who thither first brought and planted the muses," she still begins her roll of benefactors with the name of "Sigebert, King of the East Angles, who established schools here in the year 630 A.D." These schools probably were in existence at the Norman Conquest, and some authorities maintain that it was at Cambridge that William's son, Henry I., gained his well-known soubriquet of Beauclerc.

Cambridge derives its name from the river Cam or Granta and the bridge over it; and is called in history both Cambridge and Grantbridge. Favoured alike by Church and State, by the Bishops of Ely and Norwich, by Edward III. and the Black Prince, by York and Lancaster, by the sainted Henry VI. and Margaret of Anjou no less than by Elizabeth Woodville, by the strong-minded mother of Henry VII., and, above all, by Henry VIII. Cambridge grew and flourished throughout the Middle Ages; but it was not until the time of Queen Elizabeth, the age of Bacon and Burleigh, when England was no longer governed either by soldiers or priests, but by statesmen by profession, that we meet with those names of which the University is proudest. Macaulay, himself a Cambridge man, boldly declares that in intellectual activity and in readiness to admit improvements, the superiority was then, and has ever since been, on the side of the less ancient and splendid institution. Cambridge had the honour of educating those celebrated Protestant bishops whom Oxford had the honour of burning; and at Cambridge were formed the minds of all those great statesmen to whom chiefly is to be attributed the secure establishment of the Reformed religion in the North of Europe.

In the civil wars, while Oxford stood by the king, Cambridge as a whole was on the side of the Parliament. The reason of this is probably to be found, not so much in any want of loyalty in the colleges, as in the strong parliamentary feeling prevalent throughout the eastern counties. Indeed there is a tradition at Trinity Hall that one of the fellows of that college began to collect arms and money for the use of the king, an enterprise which came suddenly to a close about the same time, as an entry is made in one of the college registers: "Came Mr. O. Cromwell with a party;" a sentence which satisfactorily accounts for his subsequent inaction. After the Revolution of 1688 Cambridge became as distinctly the Whig as Oxford was the Tory University. George I. enriched her library; George II. contributed munificently to her Senate House; and statues of each of these sovereigns, disguised as Roman emperors, stood until recently on either side of that building, while in humbler positions, near the doorway, are statues of the younger Pitt and the "proud" Duke of Somerset, for sixty years Chancellor of the University. The town has returned two members since the time of Edward I. It is a very ancient corporation, and under the Municipal Reform Act is governed by a mayor, ten aldermen and thirty common councilmen. The University, a cor-