

## Our Contributors.

### WHAT SHOULD BE DONE WITH OUR WORN OUT MINISTERS?

BY KNOXONIAN.

The Presbytery of Kingston told the Church and the world the other day what it thinks about the state of our Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund. It was moved by Mr McCuaig and seconded by Mr. Mitchell:

"That this Presbytery views with deep concern the state of the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund of the Church, that it regards the condition of many of the aged servants of God as deplorable in the extreme—discreditable to the Church and dishonouring to God—and that it earnestly beseeches all the ministers, elders and congregational managers of the Presbytery to do their utmost and secure liberal contribution to this needy fund not only by general collection, but by personal endeavour to aid this fund." A motion was passed asking the sessions to bring this matter before the congregations.

Viewed as a mere resolution, this is all that could be desired, but what effect will it have when the question has been asked: "What should be done with our worn-out ministers?" So far the answer has practically been—*nothing*. A few—very few—of our worn-out ambassadors have a little means of their own. Some brought a little money from the Old Country, and in the early days invested it in farm lands or town lots. Their property increased in value because all the property around it increased in value. Some saved a little money when living was cheap. A few have rich wives—rich in money, we mean—all ministers' wives are rich in goodness. The very few who have in these ways managed to lay up a little for a rainy day, may, with the aid of a retiring allowance from the congregations they served, be able to keep the wolf from the door until the coffin lid closes upon them, but the number who can do even that is comparatively small. It may be assumed that of the 700 ministers now serving the Church a very small proportion have any money, nor can they by any reasonable economy or exertion save any. Nothing can be made now by investing in a little land for two good reasons: the average minister has no money to invest, and even if he had, a little land anywhere on this side of Manitoba costs so much that nothing could be made by investing in it.

Somebody may say worn-out ministers might do a little easy work, and thus earn a livelihood in their old days. Do such Daniels know that a minister cannot be put upon the worn-out list until two doctors certify that he is not able to do any work? Unless the doctors are entirely mistaken in their diagnosis the very terms upon which a minister gets upon the worn-out list makes further work an impossibility. And then it should be remembered that in this age and country there is no easy work for a minister if he does his duty. The easiest work is in the largest congregations, not because the work itself is easier there, but because the minister has more help. The hardest work is in the small mission stations where a preacher has to do everything himself, preach three times and travel from ten to twenty miles every Sabbath. Many of these stations are much more exacting in their demands than large congregations are. They often demand more visiting, more personal attention and much more tea-drinking than the large congregations that supply them with the Gospel. About the only man who can supply them successfully is a stalwart student who has had a good training in a foot-ball club. To speak of a feeble, worn-out minister doing the work that has to be done in our mission stations in winter is sheer, downright, undiluted nonsense.

There is positively very little church work that a worn-out minister can do regularly; but is there nothing of a secular kind that he can make a living at in his old days? Well, let us see. Perhaps he might keep a toll-gate. But the toll-gate industry is well-nigh defunct. Nearly all progressive municipalities have abolished toll-gates. And then our rich Presbyterian farmers might feel hurt driving through a toll-gate kept by the man who had preached the Gospel to them, married them, baptized their children, prayed with their dying and buried their dead.

How would it do for worn-out ministers to keep a saloon? Hitherto the saloon business has been lucrative and comparatively easy. It does not require much physical strength to mix and sell drinks. There are at least two objections to this plan. The Scott Act agitation is making the saloon business somewhat

risky. The other objection is, however, somewhat more serious. Saloons are situated in large cities and towns, and our aristocratic Presbyterian people might feel somewhat uneasy passing the door of a saloon that they knew to be kept by a Presbyterian minister. They would not like to hear the people of the other denomination say that any given saloon was kept by a retired Presbyterian clergyman. It might hurt their feelings to hear such a thing. Even something worse might occasionally happen. Some high-toned Presbyterian might be seized with a sudden colic—such things have happened—and he might be under the painful necessity of hurrying to the nearest saloon for a hot drink. Just fancy the feelings of that man as he watched his former minister, or some worn-out doctor in divinity or college professor, mixing his hot drink! It has been frequently suggested in private that worn-out ministers should be turned out to die like an old horse. This suggestion was made in print, if we remember rightly, by—well, not the *Globe* exactly, but by a well-known writer who manufactures heavy thunder in the *Globe* office. It is a practical suggestion, but is not based on fact. No decent man turns out an old horse that has served him long and well, to die. The old horse is well-cared for in his old days, or *shot* to put him out of trouble. Perhaps, this latter method is the one meant. If so, several considerations may be urged in its favour. It is a simple plan—delightfully, charmingly simple. It would be thoroughly efficacious. It would bring about the desired result a good deal faster than the committee on consolidation of the colleges can put the six colleges into three. Some objections might, of course, be raised. Some astute ecclesiastical lawyer might urge that the plan was *ultra vires*. Well, it does seem rather *ultra*. Another might contend that it is incompetent, whatever that may mean. Somebody who loves to go to the roots of everything might declare this method unconstitutional. Some stickler for those aged, venerable twins, "use and wont," might say it was an innovation and without precedent. The Synod of Dort said nothing about this method of disposing of worn-out ministers. The Westminster Assembly formulated no deliverance on the subject. There is nothing bearing upon it in our articles of union. All objections might be raised, and still this suggestion is the only clear, definite, practical answer that has ever been given to the question:

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Does some stern moralist or æsthetic stickler say this is not dealing seriously with a serious subject? Seriously, forsooth! We have been dealing seriously with the question for years; but our serious dealing amounts to the beggarly pittance of \$200 a year for men who have worn themselves out in the service of the Church. The Assembly has spoken seriously, Synods and Presbyteries have spoken seriously, the Conveners of the committee charged with this business have written circulars that were serious enough in all conscience. The retired ministers who barely have the necessaries of life are serious enough. Two or three dozen ministers are kept from retiring by the fear of starvation, and they are terribly serious; but what does all the seriousness amount to? If ridicule can puncture the epidermis of Presbyterianism, and put one loaf more on the table of one worn-out servant of God, this contributor does not care a brass farthing what anybody says about his method of working. The loaf is the main thing for a hungry family.

#### MISSION WORK IN TRINIDAD.

The Board of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society (Western Section) has kindly sent us the following interesting letter for publication, forwarded by Miss Campbell, Secretary of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society (Eastern Section):

To the Halifax Woman's Foreign Missionary Society this letter is sent, with the request that after the reading of this communication the ladies will unite in prayer for the Princetown Hindi scholars and their teacher. I have written less to our own Society this year, as I thought the younger sisters in the field would write. They being in the island only a short time, everything would be fresh to them, and, consequently, their letters would be more interesting than any I could send.

I have not been idle with my pen; I have written to other bands, and to others interested in the work. I have had the great blessing of good health this year.

I have had no fear; I have had better health this year than I have enjoyed for a long time.

Our school has been large; we have had two of our advanced pupils, Abdool and lame Annie Mena, appointed to be monitors. A large number of girls still attend, and some of them make good progress, others are curiously dull and stupid; but some of the elder girls now show a desire to learn about Christ, and love to listen to religious conversation. Annie Mena now has a class of dear little ones in the Sabbath school. She and Jessie go with Mr. Sudeen and Thomas Anaja to assist in the meetings held among the Hindus who live in the villages of Mount Stuart and Palmyra.

Our dear Chinese girls are growing in knowledge and, I trust, in grace. On Friday, August 7, we had a very interesting meeting. The children, hearing that Mr. McLeod would soon leave us, made up the sum of \$83, and bought gifts for their minister, his wife and little boys. The room was sweet with the perfume of tropical flowers, bright with the clean and gaily dressed children of European, African, Indian and Chinese races; white, brown, black and yellow faces all glowed with childish glee and importance as our friends came in. We had songs, readings, poems and a very amusing essay upon boils, which I send on. Then came the presentation; an address was read, signed by eighty-six names; a pretty tea-set was given to Mrs. McLeod, cups to the little boys, and the following useful articles were given to Mr. McLeod: paper knife, ruler, paper and envelopes and a very pretty inkstand. Rev. C. Darling and Mr. Franklyn made some kind remarks; then a new feature, Mrs. Darling and Mrs. Palmer each made a nice little speech. A feast of fruit and cakes, given by our kind and generous manager, Mr. H. B. Darling, closed the happy afternoon. The dear children all found how true were the sacred words: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Our young monitor, Abdool, about fifteen years old, was very active in this matter; he gave generously, collected the little offerings, and learned some beautiful verses that now seem almost prophetic in regard to his own death. He was attacked by our West Indian disease, fever; while all the other young people were out, poor Abdool was tossing upon a bed of pain; he rapidly grew worse, on Saturday we felt alarmed, and on Monday he died. All through his illness no profane or improper word was spoken by our dear boy; he would sing hymns, pray and repeat texts. Often, in the wildest delirium of fever, he would say: "Do not keep me, I want to go and see Jesus." Abdool begged his parents, who were Mohammedans, to let him join the Christian Church; but they would not listen for a moment to his pleadings. Last year, fearing that he would become a Christian, his parents removed him from school. He obeyed very reluctantly, but still attended all the church services. A few months ago Rev. Mr. McLeod gave him a situation in the P. T. school; he was teacher of the infant class; kind and gentle, he was very much loved by his tiny scholars. He used to go out in the highways and byways to call them in; often the heathen people would get angry with him, call him bad names, one expression often used: "A Christian dog." Abdool bore all with patience, sometimes remarking: "People treated Christ worse." We had high hopes of Abdool, but our Father had other plans for His Hindu child: Abdool was called up higher—called in the bloom and freshness of early youth "to go and see Jesus" as he had longed to do. Through his illness the Koran was read by the Mohammedan priests, but nothing could shake dear dying Abdool's faith. So, calmly trusting in Christ, he died. His poor mother cried: "Oh, Abdool, my son, Abdool!" Not yet can the desolate mother say with David: "I shall go to him." The dead body was rolled in cotton, carried to the grave upon a caban, the grave was dug, water poured in, then loose earth, a stiff batter was made of the earth and water, the body, without a coffin, was put in, the grave filled up, and all was over.

You can well understand how precious the testimony of this boy has been; the deep impression it has made upon the young people around, and how encouraging to find that instruction has been blessed to the saving of souls. Do you not think, dear sisters, that the salvation of this dear lad repaid you in some degree for your labours, your prayers, and does it not shed a sacred glory over the gold and silver that has been put upon the altar?

Three young men have joined the Church since