

Our Contributors.

PROBATIONERS AND MINISTERS' WIVES.

BY KNOXONIAN.

The minister's wife who told the world in the *British Weekly* about her probationers is not to be allowed a monopoly in that kind of literature. Another minister's wife writes an article on "My Students," from which we may make a few extracts later on, and a probationer gives his experience about visiting manse and dares to tell what he knows about ministers' wives that have entertained him. On the whole he seems to have a much more favourable opinion of ministers' wives than the minister's wife from whom we quoted in this column last week has of probationers. Of four manse ladies he found one not particularly entertaining, another "a capital woman" who made her manse "almost like home," a third "charming," and the fourth "a real live heroine," who played nicely, talked in such a way that the probationer thought she should be appointed a professor of pastoral theology, and made him go away invoking a probationer's blessing on "the head of that busy, cheery, and thoughtful heroine." But let the probationer tell his own story, beginning with Mrs. W. on whom he writes these rather unfavourable impressions at seven o'clock on Monday morning:

MRS. W.

Seven o'clock on Monday morning—"Yesterday the work was pretty hard, and the afternoon service was not a crowded affair. Mrs. W. thought that the people took the chance to remain away in the absence of Mr. W. Do feel Mondayish. Wonder if I might move about anywhere and not disturb anybody? A manse as well as a home has its unwritten laws. A few days of un-professional life would enable one to find these out. But from Saturday till Monday a probationer may be only an indispensable put-up-with-for-a-little-being. Better stay where I am. Could enjoy looking over Mr. W's books, but the study would give one the shivers. 'Break fast at half past eight, Mr. S.' Wish it were over. Wonder if the morning paper can be got at the station?"

Now it was scarcely polite for Mrs. W. to tell this probationer that the people did not attend well on Sabbath afternoon because he preached. It may have been true but that made the matter all the harder to bear. It was not the probationer's fault that he was there. No doubt Mr. W. invited him to come and it is scarcely the fair thing to invite a man to preach for you and then find fault with his sermon. If you don't like his sermons let him and them alone. Nor was it the hospitable thing to have the study in a condition that would give a probationer the "shivers." No doubt seven o'clock was rather early for Monday morning, but something might have been done to counteract the tendency to shiver. Looking at the case all round we think the internal administration of that manse would have been improved by a visit from a minister like Dr. Willis.

The next manse lady was a lady of a very different kind. Attention, please, all manse ladies, while the probationer tells us how he felt on this Saturday night and Monday morning:

MRS. N.

Saturday Night, 10.30.—Musing while turning out MSS.—"Mrs. N. is a capital woman. This is almost like home. That is a thoughtful plan, too, to have the study fire lit in the winter morning. Am to use it if I like, or let it alone, and do what or go where I please in general? If ever I get a manse, that study fire and this plan of freedom will be among the 'Rules and Forms of Procedure' for probationers. Well, what is it to be to-morrow? 'Who hath believed our report,' etc? No; not cheery enough. 'The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs,' etc.? This will suit better. Will decide finally in the study to-morrow morning whether the afternoon text will be 'Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift,' or 'Godliness is profitable unto all things,' etc. . . . Mrs. N. is a capital woman."

Monday morning, about 8.—"Did enjoy yesterday. Find feeling in that church. Rather kind of Mrs. N. saying that she thought my place was a pulpit. How I did relish that long quiet rest in the study last night. It was filling after emptying. Must get back to town by the morning train, although Mrs. N. has asked me so kindly to await her husband's return"

Now just see what a benediction that minister's wife was. The probationer felt so happy on Saturday night that he instinctively hunted for a cheery, bright, hopeful kind of sermon. No doubt the people were equally benefited, for tone is every thing in a sermon. On Monday morning the probationer went back to Edinburgh in fine spirits, the uppermost thought in his mind being that "Mrs. N. is a capital woman." If Mr. N. is ever proposed for a professor of theology, or Moderator, or anything of that kind, and that probationer is a pastor, we can guess at the first trial how his vote will go. A capital woman is a great power.

The next manse lady charmed the probationer so much that he talked with her all Sabbath evening. Most preachers prefer being quiet on Sabbath evenings, but this minister's wife talked so cleverly and sensibly that the probationer had a delightful time. Hear him.

MRS. Y.

Sabbath night, about 12 o'clock.—"Mrs. Y. is charming. This has been a delightful time. How refreshing that talk has been. Mrs. Y. is decidedly clever, and has a good deal of common sense too. (Some time ago Mrs. N. was the *beau ideal*, but would not object to have a little of Mrs. Y. put into the composition of Mrs. N.) Very kind of her promising to gather a fresh bouquet before the early train. Will divide the flowers between old Betty, the invalid, and little Annie."

But the best comes last. The next minister's wife makes the probationer think that if he could get a wife like her his life would not be spent in vain. He muses thus as he drives to the train on Monday morning:

MRS. Z.

Monday morning, while driving to the train.—"A real live

heroine, hidden in a corner of the land from all but her gentle 'Mr. Z.' and her five or six young children and her servant lassie. A man does not live in vain who gets a wife like that, and lets her work in that way. When did she learn to play so nicely? How in the world does she do so much and seem to be always about as neat and clean as a new pin, and able to talk for ever? She is worth listening to too. She could train a college of pastors. Am afraid I failed to convince her that the 'melodious' children did not disturb me. If the blessing of a probationer is of any value, let it rest on that manse, and especially on the head of that busy, cheery, and thoughtful heroine."

We earnestly hope this probationer will never get a wife like Mrs. Z. He has not intelligence enough to deserve a woman like her. If he knew anything about manse he would know that the noblest women that God creates are found in "corners of the land," adorning their positions and doing just such work as he found Mrs. Z. doing. "When did she learn to play so nicely?" She learned when a dutiful girl in some good father's house, of which she was the light, and now she is a blessing to her family in a home of her own.

We fear this probationer has a little touch of the Metropolitan dude in him. No doubt he spent a few years in Edinburgh, and perhaps learned to think that no woman outside of the Capital knew anything. That kind of a lesson is soon acquired by students in capitals not nearly so large or so polished as Edinburgh. Perhaps this probationer was plucked a few times during his college course, and the plucking prolonged his stay in the city so much that he came to the conclusion that no lady outside of Edinburgh could play on the piano. A few more visits to corners of the land may teach him a few lessons quite as necessary as any that he ever learned in the New College.

A VILLAGE IN INDIA.

SECOND PAPER.

On our way to the village we will probably pass the old-fashioned threshing floor—an elevated mud platform beaten hard—where, perchance, we may see the muzzled ox treading out the corn, or the winnowers, with their small shallow baskets, having a rim on three sides somewhat like a shovel. This filled with corn is raised above the head and gently shaken, with the result that the heavy grain falls at their feet, whilst the chaff is blown away by the wind. If it is December or January we may see the harvesters at work slowly and painfully cutting bundle after bundle with the hook of our forefathers. What a revelation the self-binders or threshing machines would be to the simple workers of India. All their agricultural implements are of the rudest description. The plough is simply a crook, having a sharpened point or nose of iron, and with such the ground is little better than scratched, and everything else is of the same character. One wonders sometimes why people of such intelligence do not use more suitable tools; but the explanation is not far to seek. First, there is a general fear of machinery, because they are unacquainted with it, and on its getting out of order they have no means of repairing it again, their rude blacksmiths having no turning lathes or screw-cutting machine that any town in Canada can supply; and secondly, there is such a dense population that must live somehow, and that would have to seek some other mode of living were machinery to come into general use. Manufacturing centres are being gradually established, and as caste loses its power emigration becomes not only a possibility, but an actual fact; and so, as the demand for workers increases, the introduction of labour-saving machines will become a necessity. In India today we have a teeming population, almost as great per square mile as that of England without England's great manufacturing centres.

Think of these centres in England emptied, and of the people forced to seek for the means of existence in the fields, and then try to think of England not only producing enough for its own wants, but able to export a large surplus to other countries. It is impossible to conceive of such a state of things in England, but in India it is a stern reality. We can thus understand not only how great the natural wealth of India must be, but also why it continues to go on in defiance of some of the simplest laws of political economy.

The population of India is still increasing under the healthy influence of the British Government, but the necessity which this produces is only hastening the advanced movements among the people. Caste is the great hindrance to all advance to-day, and is the last prop that is supporting tottering Hinduism with all its social enormities. Necessity knows no law, and where caste attempts to oppose necessity it must be overthrown. Necessity demands manufacturing centres and emigration.

Manufacturing centres are springing up in India just as the market for goods opens up. The importation of English goods has developed a taste and therefore a demand, for western improvements.

With this comes new longings to see and learn from other nations. Ambition, once aroused and given room to develop, knows no bounds, and the wonderful latent energy of the people, so long kept down by the religious and political tyranny of the country, once given a chance to rise, carries the nation almost at one bound from a state of infantile weakness to manly vigour and energy. Many of India's sons, therefore—in defiance of the caste rules and with the encouragement of the best of the land—are to be found in England largely seeking for the secret of her success. Their trading instincts have led them to leap over the confines of India, and to-day not a few of the trading centres of the East are largely in their hands. Each trading centre becomes in time a colony, whose increasing advantages form an at-

traction too powerful to be resisted by the crowded and less favoured ones in the Mother Country.

The wheat supply of India has affected the prices in the English market, and as new railways open up the large districts that cannot now get their surplus grain to the ports, the effects will be yet more felt; but no great danger need be apprehended; for as these manufacturing centres are established, India's surplus will be required at home.

To see that the above is no dream, turn to the cotton industry. A few years ago the raw cotton was sent home to England to be there manufactured and then returned to India. To-day the large cotton factories of Bombay, Cawnpore, etc., not only supply the Indian and Eastern markets, but also compete in the Western markets with the English goods.

The people of that great land—one of the richest in the world in natural wealth—are advancing with leaps and bounds and I shall be greatly surprised if before many years roll on we do not find all our western improvements both manufactured and used as extensively in India as in Canada, and the people of India doing in the East all that England has done in the West.

But to return to things as they are. You look in vain for fences, such as we are familiar with at home. The territory belonging to or rented by each village is marked by a pillar and those fields that are irrigated have around them a small bank of mud from six inches to a foot in height, but otherwise no boundaries are visible. The flocks and herds have to be taken out to pasture in the morning and again to be brought back at night—to save them from the wild animals. A number of boys and girls do this, whose duties during the day are, first to keep the cattle from the growing grain, and secondly, to gather their droppings. Each carries on his head a basket in which the manure is gathered. When they have opportunity this manure is mixed with dry grass and water, made into cakes about one inch thick and a foot in diameter, and then left in the sun to dry. This affords the principal fuel of these simple people, and accounts for the strong smell of ammonia so marked in the evening when the village community is preparing the evening meal.

You notice too on nearing the village a flag flying on the top of one of the trees. It is probably only a dirty piece of red cloth, but it indicates the near abode of some holy man. I remember on one occasion going to a village with my Christian workers. It was evening. The village people were all down where the sugar was being made from the cane, and his holiness had taken up his position near the mill. His throne consisted of a piece of bamboo matting, his dress of the ashes of the dead and the pretence of a loin cloth, his symbol of authority a pair of long tongs—now stuck in the ground by his side—and his principal occupation smoking. As the people passed they were made to touch the mat with their foreheads and to present to him whatever he demanded in the shape of food, etc. As we came up he looked at us with no friendly eye and indicated that the native Christians should do as the others. On our refusal to recognize, as he wished, his authority he became abusive and threatening. He was given as much rope as he wished, and so in his efforts to injure us he referred to facts in the lives of some Europeans that he could only gather as a servant in such a house. This convinced me that he was false at least in pretending to be a Brahmin, and so drawing a bow at a venture I charged him with having been a servant, and with having assumed that garb to save him from detection, and it proved to be correct. The next seen of him was his rapidly disappearing form in the distance. A guilty conscience led him to suspect I knew more and could do more than would be pleasant, and so he cleared out. The fakir's dress has often been the cloak of many a crime. It is so easy to lose one's identity by shaving or adding to the hair and putting on the dress of some one of the many religious orders, and then seeking asylum in some distant village where the credulity of the people has not yet been injured by the influence of Christianity. But their days are numbered. As one sees the contempt of the thinking classes for these men it is not rash to prophecy their speedy downfall. May the day speedily come. No community can prosper with one-tenth of its entire number eating the bread of idleness.

But more again.

J. WILKIE.

INCIDENTS OF EXTRA-PASTORAL WORK.

The main portion of a pastor's labours must be among his own flock, and among them he must expect to reap the richest and most abundant fruit. But I suppose that every minister is called to do work outside his congregation, which may be productive of very important results. There was, perhaps, more of this in former years when labourers were few, and when a minister's holiday was a mission to some destitute district, from which he returned blessed in spirit as well as invigorated in body. I suppose, however, that ministers still from time to time do some outside work, and, perhaps, may meet with very interesting manifestations of the working of the Lord's hand. A few incidents of this kind in my own ministry may interest your readers.

Shortly after my ordination I was sent by Presbytery, along with a co-presbyter now in glory, as a deputation to visit an outlying section of the Church. During our mission we arranged to dispense the sacrament of the Lord's supper in one of our congregations, which was done with preaching on all the days of the week then customary. On the morning of one of these, a beautiful summer morning it was, we were sitting chatting in front of our host's residence, when the conversa-