

## Our Contributors.

LET US PROVE IT EVERY DAY.

BY KNOXONIAN.

Naturally and very properly Presbyterians think their own Church on the whole the best ecclesiastical organization in the country. They would be lean, slim Presbyterians if they didn't. Intelligent Presbyterians—that is, the great majority of the body—know very well that their Church has some weak points, but they also know that all the other denominations have their weak points too. Any kind of an organization has some weak points, and must continue to have as long as organizations are composed of members of the Adam family. In fact the family itself has some rather weak points constitutionally. If we knew as much about some of the other denominations as we know about our own, perhaps our love of Presbyterianism would be increased rather than diminished.

Now, supposing the Presbyterian Church to be, in our opinion, on the whole the best, what is the right way for us to show our superiority, be it real or imaginary? There is no use in vociferating on platforms about our good points. The other denominations can vociferate too. The Methodists could always beat us in the vociferating business. Anyway, it is a poor business. It does more harm than good. It hurts even a poor tea-meeting, and anything that can hurt a poor tea-meeting must be pretty bad. People who belong to other denominations go home more or less rasped and say: "We went to the Presbyterian Church to have a good time, and heard nothing but Presbyterian, Presbyterian, Presbyterian all the way through." Taking a man's money and then needlessly rasping him is a mean way to treat him. If even the best kind of talk about Presbyterianism can do the Church any good, this should be the best year of our history. There was enough of denominational oratory in the Pan Council to have created a Presbyterian "boom" equal to the boom that struck Winnipeg ten years ago. When the returns come in at the next Assembly the good results will be shown, so far as such results can be shown by figures. Let us all hope the showing will be favourable.

As Presbyterians, we of course believe that our creed is Scriptural. What is the best way for the average man to prove that his creed is a good one? By wrangling about it on the street corners and in corner groceries? Not by any means. The best way to prove the superiority of our doctrines is by living pure, consecrated, self-denying lives. Every man will live as his creed, neither much better nor much worse. It is a great relief at times to know that some men who vociferously defend Calvinism don't know much about it. If they really understood and believed the doctrines the Armenian brother would get an awful hold on them by simply saying: Well, if your life is the natural product of your doctrine, the system cannot be a very good one. Of course the same thing might be said to some who defend the Armenian or any other system. All of which goes to show that a good life is the most telling argument in favour of good doctrine.

The right way to prove that our system of government is the best is to manage our church business better than the business of any other church is managed. There is no sort of sense in ringing the changes on "government by Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods and Assemblies," and then bungling our business. There is grim humour in hearing a speech on Presbyterian order—theoretically we are great people for order—and then going into a Presbytery or other church court when the members are wrestling with an exciting case. Parity of Presbyters is a fine phrase, but if you look for the thing in the General Assembly at times you may be tempted to conclude that the phrase is all there is left of it. If our system of church government is the best, the right way to prove its superiority is by governing the Church well.

There is not so much said now about our system of settling ministers as there used to be. The fact is, many of our best people are beginning to lose faith in it. To enlarge on its weak points and expose the wrongs to which it too often leads would be an easy, though perhaps useless, task. As a rule there is not much use in exposing evils without suggesting a practical remedy. No one seems to be able to suggest a remedy for the ills incident to settling ministers by call. In some of the churches of the United States they seem to have given the thing up in desperation. Liberty has degenerated into license. Congregations do as they please, and the clerical adventurers are in clover to the eyes. We may soon arrive at the same degree of perfection here. If our system is the right one, the only way we can show it is by making speedy and useful settlements.

From time immemorial we have said a good deal about our educated ministry. We think we have always "stood up" for theological education. So we have. Our fathers or grandfathers founded Queen's and Knox when wheat was not worth as much as it is even this winter. In proportion to the size of their little pile they paid more liberally for the support of colleges than we do now. Some of us can well remember the efforts made by a few struggling Presbyterians in the early days to give Knox a good start. One of the difficulties they had to contend against was a prevailing prejudice against college-made ministers. The denominations that ridiculed an educated ministry and tried to prevent the poor settler from contributing have since erected and equipped theological colleges themselves. The greatest difficulty, however, was grim

poverty. All that is over now, and the only way left to show our appreciation of the advantages of a good theological education is

TO PREACH WELL.

To boast about our record, in the matter of theological education, make high sounding speeches about our colleges, send in reports to the General Assembly fairly bristling with honours received by our students, and then preach weak sermons is simply to make a laughing-stock of ourselves before the Church and country. If we claim to be first in theological education, the right way to vindicate that claim is to be first in pulpit power.

We profess to be a missionary church, and so we are. Our Home Mission work is perhaps as well done, in proportion to the money given the Committee, as the Home Mission work of any church in the world. We are not on the "inside" in Foreign work, and have no special knowledge of the operations, but, judging from the number of missionaries sent out of late, and the general interest and activity, we should say our Foreign work compares favourably with the Foreign work of any church of our means, age and numbers. The right way, however, to prove that we are a missionary church is

TO DO MISSION WORK,

and do more and better work every year.

Are we a liberal church, and, if so, are we growing in liberality? These are questions not easily answered. Our annual total has increased to a little over two millions, but that proves nothing more than that the Presbyterian Church has thought well to pay two millions for charitable and religious purposes. The size of the "pile" from which the two millions came must be known before we can say anything definite about our liberality. A man's liberality is shown not by the amount he gives but by the amount left after he gives. The same rule holds good in regard to a church.

Moral—If the Presbyterian Church is a good one—shall we say the best one—let the people show it by their lives and work. If our colleges are good let the fact be made known by powerful Gospel preaching. If our system of government is the best, let the fact be seen by the best governing. If we are a missionary Church let our missionary work prove it. In short, let our works prove our superiority—if we have any to prove.

### MEMORIES OF A CANADIAN MANSE.

BY KIMO.

(Continued.)

He was joined in 1859 by his wife and little boy, then six months old, and was able to offer her, an Edinburgh lady, two or three rooms in a log house. But she too loved the Master, and brought to her husband's side brightness and peace. Always happy and contented, never a murmur escaped her. In 1862 the red brick manse and the frame church was built at — and life became more easy. To this home they brought their little boy and girl, the little boy about two years old and the writer a few months.

Dim, very dim, are the first memories of the dear old place. Quivering pictures of long steps to be wearily climbed when tired of play under the trees, of a great heavy door, which would not open, and of heavy thumps on it which would bring a kind face and a loving smile to open to the wee toddler. Memories of a gentle, tired mamma, and a busy papa, of romps and scampers of one great day being led proudly off to school, away down through the village and along the great street, up such a steep, steep hill, and into the awful place, the school-room. Desks arranged around the wall, behind which on benches sat the pupils, on one side the girls, on the other the boys. The subdued hum of the students as they rocked to and fro on the benches going over audibly their tasks, the great row standing in the dread presence of the teacher and being spoken to by him, above all, that teacher himself with his long shaggy beard, his bare feet, and his deep sepulchral voice; these for a while satisfied. But suddenly through the strangeness, over the hum of the voices, far stronger than the dread of the teacher, came the thought of the distance from, and the longing for mamma, and the quiet was broken by the bitter cry. "I want mamma." Efforts to comfort were unavailable, and still crying "mamma, mamma," weary steps were turned homeward.

Oh, mamma, mamma, how often since has that cry gone out into the silence which envelopes you, how often since has your name been called; but you slept on in your quiet green bed, all unheeding the throbbing, bursting, heart above. Oh! mother, mother, after all those years how sick the heart grows at the thought of the distance and silence between us.

Home was reached, but mamma was sick, too sick to see her lonely girlie. Then come vivid memories of a hot, close day in April, when the birds were singing and the buds springing, but the air was very still, when all the windows and doors were thrown open, and each one walked with light footstep and spoke with bated breath; of being carried to mamma, only to find her oh! how changed! her beautiful eyes so bright, her cheeks so rosy, but struggling so hard for breath. Then all was over and the voice was still, and we saw her again only as she lay so pure and white, but oh, so cold, in the long narrow bed. We carried her out through the quiet churchyard, and in God's acre laid her.

Memory whispers only of a silent mother, of strangers, of a black, black dress, of a new-made grave altogether ours, of

a home strangely still and empty, but the memory of others fills in the picture and tells of the loneliness of their pastor in that bitter hour, tells of him standing by that coffin in which was laid his heart, alone with his two little ones, of his tender care for the little lassie of four who questioned ceaselessly, "Will the judgment day come soon? I want to see mamma."

Long years after he once told how he learned in that hour to trust his Heavenly Father as he had never trusted before. On that day he had paid to a consulting doctor his last dollar and knew not where to look for more, as the congregation was "in arrears." He took this trouble, as all others, to his Master, and almost "as he was speaking" a messenger from the other station arrived with a sum sufficient. "Since then," he said, "I have never doubted Him, and He has never failed me."

Only those who knew him most intimately felt what a terrible blow had fallen upon him. His was a nature which loved quietly but intensely, and long, and his young wife by her nobleness and winsomeness had twined herself about his very being. He buried his love for her with her, and resolutely faced life alone.

The following Sabbath he preached in the village church close to the spot where his Marion slept. The strain however had been too great and his congregation kindly granting him leave of absence; the manse windows were boarded up, poor Fido, our dog, was sent away, and a visit was paid to the old land. Meantime his little one stayed with his parents, who had settled in the country.

After an absence of six months we all returned once more to the empty house. Home it became again, for into our desolation came an aunt, our father's maiden sister, one of God's hand-maidens, whose entire life was self-forgetfulness and care for others. What tender care she brought to the widowed heart and orphaned children, what ceaseless watchfulness and prudent management, what a fund of stories for the little ones and quiet fun for the father! The memory of her sly humour, and of the merry twinkle of her eye is now an antidote of sadness and worry. To us she was in very truth a mother, to him a sister. Ah, how have we repaid that care? As those gentle hands become feeble, as those busy feet falter, does her loving heart grow strong in the knowledge that two younger hearts are nobler and better for her long vigil? God alone knows how often that prayer goes up, "Bless her, oh Father, as Thou didst bless us in sending her."

With her as his helper, the pastor began again his work in the vineyard. The country was opening up and matters were much improved, making his labours less trying. But there was still much heavy night-work.

Often to cheer his lonely travelling hours, one or other of the little ones accompanied him. How well we remembered those long drives over rough roads to meetings held at night in the old farmhouses. We see the snowy floor of the kitchen; the glittering pans on the wall waxing and waning in the flickering light of the long tallow candles, the quiet creak of the rocker as the mother hushed the babe at her breast, forming a sweet accompaniment to the gentle tone of the pastor; the quaint old psalm tunes sung with many a trill and quaver, increasing the drowsy spell which is broken only by the benediction, "Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all, amen."

Then follow hearty handshakes and kindly queries for this one and that one while wraps are being adjusted, till the strong voice at the door announces, "all ready, Mr. —" and we are once more out in the darkness, jolting over the rough roads. The creaking of the springs becomes fainter and fainter, the firm step of the pony more and more distant, the kind work of encouragement to the wise, patient creature less distinct, then all is lost in sleep. Soon comes the awakening at home, when we are hurried off to bed, dimly realizing that it is almost eleven o'clock.

Again in the manse we sit by the cheery fire while the storm rages so wildly outside, listening, oh so eagerly, for "our bells," wondering if papa will ever come, rising as the wind howls and beats against the window to peer out at the awful storm and whisper the prayer, that "He who neither slumbers nor sleeps, will not suffer his foot to slide." Again we feel the awful sickness of heart as the hours pass and we hear no bells. We remember that his overcoat has grown light in service, that his cap and gloves are worn thin, and we fear—but hark! the bells. Then the joyful rush for the lantern; one throws wide the door, another stirs the fire, and warms anew the slippers which are already warm with waiting. Soon the snowy form appears, and while plaid and coat are removed, we hear of the storm, of the struggle of the gallant Brown through the heavy drifts, of places through which she could not break her way, of her wise and patient waiting while her master tramped a path for her, and how at last he reached the meeting place and found, notwithstanding the storm, a goodly number of earnest hearts waiting for the Master's words. Soon the storm and struggle were forgotten by that earnest heart, in his joy at being privileged to testify for his Lord and Master.

In a close, crowded room he spoke for over an hour, and then out into the storm again to battle his way home. This, too often, the preparation for a long night in the study, followed by a harder day.

Need we wonder that at the age of fifty-five he sank to rest with the banner he had borne so nobly and so well still