

## Our Contributors.

### DEFENDING PERSONS AND THINGS THAT NEED NO DEFENCE.

BY KNOXIAN.

Some years ago we had occasion to stop at a country hotel in which a number of local young men were spending a holiday in a manner not specially beneficial to themselves or particularly pleasant to the other guests. Under the combined influence of whiskey and sham loyalty—two things that sometimes go together—one of them became noisy and apparently wanted somebody to hold him. He took off his coat, shouted and stamped and swore that he would "lick anybody who spoke against the Queen." Nobody was saying anything about Her Britannic Majesty. Any man in the crowd would have risked life or limb in defence of his sovereign had any defence been needed. All present were loyal men. Had an emergency arisen perhaps the noisy fellow was the only man there who would have hidden behind a woodpile. But positively no defence was needed on that occasion. The Queen was quite safe in Windsor Castle. There was not a disloyal man for miles around. There was nobody to fight. Any defence of Her Majesty was absolutely unnecessary because there was nobody or nothing to defend her against. Had this bumptious young man raised the disturbance anywhere in the neighbourhood of our beloved Queen's numerous castles that he raised in that country tavern, no doubt some of the royal officials would have handed him over to the police, and the police would have put him in the cooler. Englishmen are a matter-of-fact sort of people, and are not as much given to defending persons that need no defence as mere colonists are.

That noisy fellow was a type—a rude type possibly—but still a good type of that belligerent class of people who are everlastingly defending persons and things that need no defence. It is a small business this business of defending when nobody is attacking. It brings neither gain nor glory. There is something irresistibly comic in seeing a little fellow who does not pay his taxes defending the British Constitution when nobody is saying anything against the Constitution. The spectacle is equalled only by the slender youth who burns to defend Methodism when nobody is attacking Methodism, or the belligerent Presbyterian who strikes out wildly in favour of Calvin and the Confession of Faith when there is nobody to hit.

Once upon a time we attended a Methodist camp-meeting for an hour or two. There was a large number of people present, most of them devout, earnest people, who were no doubt pleased and profited by the exercises. A half-dozen or more ministers occupied the stand, and one of them preached a strong, practical sermon. It was a genuine, old-time Gospel effort: delivered with great fervour, and no doubt did good. At the close of the sermon a number of youngish men began to straggle around the sides of the camp, evidently bent on defending the institution. One of them, a rather impertinent looking youth, who had designs on the ministry, came our way, and in a somewhat insolent tone asked what we thought of camp meetings. His countenance fell as we assured him in the most winsome manner we could assume that we seldom thought of them at all. Then he wanted to know if we held "once in grace always in grace." We admitted that our belief was in that direction, but assured him that we had no desire to propagate Calvinistic doctrine at a camp-meeting. That young man simply wanted to defend camp-meetings and Arminian doctrine when there was nobody attacking them. Had his vanity been gratified by an argument he would have gone right away to the preachers or other leading men and told them of the big fight he had been in for Methodism and camp-meetings. The older and wiser preachers would probably have assured him that he would be better in the praying circle helping on the work than trying to raise a quarrel with stray Calvinists on the outskirts.

Let us balance this discussion by a Presbyterian incident. Years ago we visited a Presbyterian Church for an evening or two in which very large meetings were being held. There was a widespread and perhaps deep religious interest. One evening we happened to enter the church before the pastor and some who were ministers with him, and spent the time in taking notes mentally. While thus engaged an illiterate youth who had ignorance and impudence unmistakably stamped on his countenance planted his ungainly body squarely in front of ours, and in a rather menacing manner asked,

"ARE YOU OPPOSED TO REVIVAL?"

We blandly assured him that we were heartily in favour of the revival of every good cause, and he didn't seem the least pleased to hear it. What he wanted was to fight somebody, and then go away and blow about what he said to the unconverted sinner who was opposed to the "meetin's."

It is only fair to say that neither this youth nor the Methodist one already referred to had any connection with the work they favoured with their presence. Around the skirts of every gathering of that kind you always find a number of cheeky fellows who want to fight for the work. As a rule they have no connection with it except such as is given by their own impertinence.

This silly desire to defend people that nobody is attacking sometimes appears in very peculiar forms. Here is a crack-

brained youth in the first stages of the tender passion. He is burning for a chance to thrash somebody for saying something against his girl. Nobody is saying a word about her. Nobody has any desire to say anything unkindly of her. Everybody wishes her well. But the young fool is not satisfied. He wants to fight a duel to convince her that he is ready to die for her. When he is a few years married perhaps he makes her get up and kindle the fires on winter mornings.

Not much more sensible are those people who are constantly defending civil and religious liberty when nobody is in the least degree interfering with their civil or religious liberty. There is something peculiarly absurd in the spectacle of a man making a fuss about his liberty when anybody not stone blind can see he has more liberty than he knows how to use.

But our column is filled, and the subject is large, and the weather is hot, and, as the preachers say, we must come to a conclusion.

### "KNOXIAN" AND "KNOX COLLEGE MONTHLY."

MR. EDITOR,—I am glad to notice that your able contributor, "Knoxian," has had the courage to confess the very gross errors into which he some time ago fell, concerning the origin and original aims of the *Knox College Monthly*. His candour leads me to hope that he may be induced to reconsider his view of the same magazine's theological tone. He speaks as though the present editor were ready to carry the name of Knox College "through every kind of theological scuffle," etc., to become "enthusiastic in admiration of Messrs. Dods, Smith and Bruce." In fact, the effect of his whole statement—though apparently not its intention—is to make it appear that that gentleman is unworthy to edit any Presbyterian magazine. To me, on the other hand, the tone of the *Monthly* seems admirable, and to this conclusion I think I am led by a reasonable familiarity both with the matter it has contained during the past year and with the state of affairs in the Free Church of Scotland. Does "Knoxian" object to Prof. Drummond's sketch of Dr. Dods? Let him remember that it was inserted to introduce the man who had just been elected to a very important chair in the New College, Edinburgh, and that the editor disclaimed sympathy with "the theological aberrations" of its subject. Does your contributor think the editorial references to Dr. Brooks too severe? Well, if Dr. Brooks said that the Free Church is "hereafter to be identified with the enemies of the Bible," the severity was not unprovoked. Would "Knoxian" strike out Prof. Dods' inaugural address? Let him point to a more interesting, encouraging and thorough survey of the present condition of New Testament studies with regard to Dr. Bruce. I need only say that in a review of that admirable book of his, "The Training of the Twelve," he is highly spoken of, especially on account of his sympathy with his students and that the review of his "Kingdom of God" says nothing about his theology.

Where, then, is the evidence for the charges to which reference has been made? I do not deny that the *Monthly* on the whole sympathizes with Profs. Dods and Bruce in their troubles, but the source of the sympathy is the editor's conviction that they are at present conservative forces in Scotland. Mark how emphasis is given to the statement of that thoroughly evangelical and strongly Calvinistic pillar of the Church, Dr. Alex. Whyte, that Prof. Dods "holds with a firm and an increasing tenacity the everlasting essentials of the Apostolic, Calvinistic and evangelical faith."

It should not be forgotten that the younger men of the old land are at present profoundly affected by German thought. A teacher who is to save them for the Church must not merely refute the error but also detach and exhibit the truth which gives it vitality. But this is perilous work; it is difficult to get hold of the whole truth without accepting any of the error. The two professors are doing the work nobly and, even if they have not altogether escaped the peril, they deserve our cordial sympathy. Men who are in the midst of the strife but have never felt the force of the new opinions may be pardoned if they are simply angry, but those who are far enough away to think calmly and at the same time understand the position are inexcusable if they merely denounce the unwise or erroneous utterances of Drs. Dods and Bruce. Therefore we should be grateful to the *Knox College Monthly* for expressing its admiration of their able exposition and defence of Christian truth and one to whom many of your readers listen with confidence as well as pleasure should take himself sternly to task for misrepresenting its attitude and casting suspicion upon its genial and talented editor.

D. M. RAMSAY.

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### "STRANGERS WITHIN OUR GATES."

Those whom I so call in this article are the French-Canadians and the Italians in Toronto, of whom there are several hundreds.

A year ago last January a Protestant mission to the former was established. At the head of it was one Philippe de Salliers, formerly a trappist monk. After a while he left the city. Not to make my article too long, I pass over his movements afterwards. I shall say only that no one of whom I have enquired about him can tell me where he now is. No one has taken his place. Messrs. Cusin and Paull, who were

his helpers, are not able to give much time to the work, as they have to attend to their classes in languages. They, however, do what they can. On Sabbaths they have a Bible class in the afternoon, and in the evening, a service. During the rest of the week they visit French-Canadian families. I need not say that the priests do not bid them God-speed.

In compliance with an invitation from these friends, I attended on Saturday evening, May 10, a festival in celebration of the establishment of the mission. It was quite private a sort of family gathering. Among those present were a few English speaking well-wishers to the cause. Owing to the rain, which did not cease till near the hour fixed for the beginning of the festival, the attendance was much smaller than no doubt it otherwise would have been. After the singing of a hymn Mr. Cusin led in prayer in French. He then called on the writer to give an address, which the latter did in French. He began by saying that he would follow the example of the Iron Duke, who used to say, "I speak French with courage." He next related the following anecdotes to show how careful one should be who speaks in a language with which he is not thoroughly familiar.

A young Englishman, at a meeting of French people, wished to pay a compliment to his hearers, but what he said gave them a good laugh at his expense. He meant to say, "I am fond of the beautiful French language" (*la belle langue Française*). Instead of that he said, "I am fond of the beautiful Frenchwoman" (*la belle Française*).

A missionary in China came one evening to a house of entertainment. He meant to say to the host, when ordering his supper, that among other things he would like to have a chicken. The host bowed and withdrew. After a long absence, which seemed all the longer to the hungry missionary, he returned saying that he could not get one for him. What had he been doing? The missionary had really said that he would like to get a wife, and the obliging host had been doing his utmost to gratify his desire.

The speaker afterwards took up a common saying among Roman Catholics that Protestants have no religion. In reply thereto he commented on the so-called Apostles' Creed, and several essential truths not contained in it.

Mr. Cusin followed in French. He read the parable of the mustard seed, then spoke of Mr. de Salliers' withdrawal from the mission, of the difficulties connected with it, and of the duty of labouring diligently, hopefully and with prayer to Him who gives the increase, to cause the grain of mustard seed to become, in His own time, a great tree.

Next came a recess, during which the friends present were engaged in conversation, and in the consumption of ice-cream and cakes.

Afterwards Mr. Milberger gave a recitation in French. The Rev. Mr. Stark, of Toronto, followed with an address in English, setting before parents the importance of bringing up their children in the fear of God. Mr. Paull acted as interpreter.

Several French hymns were sung during the evening. At length the blessing was sung and our little *fete* came to an end.

The following evening the writer took part in the French service. After the singing of a hymn Mr. Cusin led in prayer. The writer read Isaiah xxvii., gave an address on Luke xii. 58, 59, "When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate," etc., led in prayer and pronounced the blessing.

The mission rooms are Nos. 3 and 4, 20 Queen Street West, (opposite Knox Church). In one of them is a box with a slit in the lid. Messrs. Cusin and Paull deserve encouragement in their good work. Therefore, and so forth, I need say no more on this point to the readers of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN, who, of course, are all very intelligent.

A word or two now about the Italians in Toronto. In the afternoon of the Sabbath already spoken of I attended the school for their benefit, which is kept every Sabbath at the corner of Elm and Chestnut streets. The superintendent is a Mr. Basso, Italian interpreter in the courts, a native of Genoa, who was brought up in the Romish faith. In Canada he came to the knowledge of the truth. The circumstances connected with that event are very remarkable instances of the providence of God, but I have not space here to relate them. Mr. Basso is helped by the Rev. Mr. Stark, an old Unitarian, who has long taken a deep interest in the moral and spiritual welfare of his fellow-citizens from "the sunny south," and by several ladies and gentlemen whose names I have not learned. The object of the school is to give those who attend as scholars some knowledge of English, and through that, of the word of God. No effort is made to proselytize in the usual sense of that word. The exercises are conducted chiefly in English. The afternoon when I visited the school, I did not count the number of Italians who attended, but there must have been about twenty. All were men, and all were respectably dressed. Mr. Basso gave out the hymn, "When He maketh up His jewels," in the singing of which he led. A lady played on the organ. The Rev. Mr. Stark led in prayer. Mr. Basso read Luke xvii. in Italian. The same chapter was read in English by the scholars in their classes. Mr. Buskin, a missionary in the Algoma district, gave an address in English. "Jesus, keep me near the cross" was sung. A gentleman, whose name I do not know, closed with prayer in English.

The room in which the Sabbath school is kept is very tastefully fitted up. Facing you as you go in is a large coloured portrait of King Humbert. Around it are several small Union Jacks. On the opposite wall is a large coloured picture of the royal arms of Italy. Decked with Union Jacks beside it is an engraving of a scene in the life of Columbus. At the far end is the *Witness'* portrait of our own Queen, with Union