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The Canada Presbyterian.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7th, 1891.

THE Briggs trial will soon begin in the Presbytery of New York, and the New York *Evangelist* is preparing the public mind for it by summing up some of the evil results that flowed from the trial of Lyman Beecher, Albert Barnes and Professor Swing. In thus taking time by the forelock the *Evangelist* shows that somewhere beneath or behind its conspicuous geniality and good nature there lurks something amazingly like the wisdom of the serpent.

EVEN the unsavoury distinction of originality in boodling is denied to Canadians. A leading English journal says our methods are of the Russian and French variety. It is easy to see why they should have a French flavour, but really it is hard to be told by a leading journal published right under the shadow of the throne that in matters of boodle we resemble Russia. Our beloved Queen must blush as she reads the leading British journals on Canada.

THE right thing for every honest Canadian to do at the present time is to try in every legitimate way to create a strong public opinion against unclean practices in politics. If a large majority of the people could be brought to realize that it is low, mean, and *dirty* to buy and sell votes, whether by wholesale or retail, a great deal would be gained. If decent men would make up their minds to kick boodlers and bribers out of their places of business and treat them as pirates, unclean politics would soon come to an end. Ottawa and Quebec will be cleansed when the constituencies are purified and not any sooner.

SOME one has said that a minister of the Gospel never gets into a much worse corner than when he saves his reputation for chastity by admitting that he is a fool. Sir Hector Langevin got into that corner a few days ago. His friends saved him from the punishment due a conspirator by practically admitting that he is an imbecile. If the average Canadian voter were anything like the Scotch or English elector he would ask why imbecility so pronounced as not to be able to see stealing right under his nose should so long have charge of one of the great spending departments of the Government.

THE various educational institutions in the city are entering on the season's work with an earnest and resolute purpose. Among these the Woman's Medical College comes into prominent notice. The formal opening of the session took place last week, when a number of the friends who have stood unflinchingly by the institution from the first and several new ones took part. The opening exercises were interesting in a high degree. Though it has not yet attained to that full measure of equipment its friends desire, there is now an excellent and an efficient staff of instructors who may be relied upon to do thoroughly good work. The College is fully entitled to public confidence, and its success may now be said to be assured.

AN English journal shows with much clearness and force that the manner in which Canada deals with knavery in politics will be the exact measure of the moral power of the country. Human nature being what it is, dishonest practices might creep into the executive branch of any government. The moral standing of the nation will be shown by the manner in which the knaves and their apologists and defenders are punished. If a majority of the people condone and defend wrong-doing, the end is not far off. A nation cannot long exist without a

moral character. Cynics may laugh, as cynics have always laughed, at such old-fashioned doctrine, but the laws that regulate such matters are as certain in their operation as the law of gravitation.

THE crop of this year will bring perhaps three times as much money into Canada as was brought by the crop of 1890. Will the contributions for religious and charitable purposes be much larger? There should be a marked increase, but will there be? The present promises to be a good business season but some good judges do not anticipate any great improvement in our Church funds. In a prosperous year people spend more on themselves and indulge in various kinds of extravagance that would not be thought of in a time of depression. People are more economical, more thoughtful and perhaps more prayerful when money is not plentiful. Next May will show whether a great crop means increased mission money.

A SABBATH school anniversary was being held in an Ontario town. One of the speakers made some pointed remarks to the children about the necessity of having good manners. At the close of his speech another speaker—a minister—arose and pretended to be indignant at the assault made on Canadian children. He fairly swelled with mock indignation and asked the children to vote that they had as good manners as any other children. Of course they voted. The same bid for cheap popularity will doubtless be made many times before winter is over. Some honest patriotic Canadian will have the courage to say that the people of Canada are responsible for the character of their rulers and for the manner in which their political affairs are managed. As soon as the honest man has sat down some popularity hunting demagogue—possibly a minister of the Gospel of purity—will rise and with mock heroic defence of the people. He'll strut around and almost go into hysterics while he declares that he cannot sit still and hear the people insulted. All the same the people are responsible. There is not a man in Parliament they did not send there. When a majority of the people want clean government they can have it. Nor will it ever come until they do want it.

THE utter inability of legal enactments to reform human nature is vividly shown by the number of election trials pending in Canada at the present time. About one-half of the decisions given by the people at the polls in March are being challenged in the courts, all, or nearly all, on the ground of bribery. Some years ago a most drastic law was passed to put down bribery. Some of its provisions were exceedingly severe and some of the judges in administering the law did not temper their justice with mercy to any great extent. The authorities seemed determined to stamp out bribery if it could be stamped out by law. If the present election trials are anything more than mere party manoeuvres there was more bribery than ever last March. But this was not all. The attempt to enforce the law against buying and selling votes led to personation and other scandalous practices. It is said on what seems to be good authority that personation was practised in March to an extent unknown in Canada before that time. It is the old story over again. Try to stop the corruption in one place and it will break out in another. The only remedy for Canada is to tone up the people morally. Parliaments may sit all the year round and pass laws against every kind of iniquity, but laws are useless, and sometimes worse than useless, without moral power behind them.

LIKE the French, the Italians are an inflammable people. They are easily stirred to great intensity of feeling. The French pilgrimages to Rome have been the occasion of strong manifestations on the part of young Italy. It may at this distance be somewhat difficult to apportion correctly the due measure of responsibility for the unexpected outburst that agitated Rome last week, but it is apparent that the French and Italians are not alone to blame. Since the Pope loses no opportunity of giving expression to his desire for the restoration of the temporal sovereignty, he is not altogether free from pursuing tactics to which politicians who make less exalted claims are accustomed to resort. The Head of the Roman Catholic Church delivered a stirring harrangue on the iniquity of his deprivation of the temporal power, and the impetuous young French pilgrims went straightway to the Pantheon where the remains of Victor Eman-

uel repose, and some of them conducted themselves in a manner that no well regulated pilgrims should. Their conduct kindled a blaze that was a surprise all round. The popular indignation rose to such a height that its meaning was unmistakable. It is likely that the Pope will be more guarded in his orations bewailing his deposition from the rank of earthly potentates, especially when addressing excitable French pilgrims.

THE census returns have their lessons for the Church as well as for the State. They show quite clearly the places that will stand church extension and the places in which no new congregations should be started, at least for the present. To open a new mission station or start a new congregation in the face of a stationary or declining population is the reverse of a wise policy. Congregations are made of people, and if the people are leaving any given point the proper way is to follow them with the Gospel. There is not much to be done in the way of extension in the older provinces outside of some of the cities, except perhaps in the northern parts of Ontario. The increase during the last decade in Prince Edward Island would not make one congregation; in New Brunswick it would not make more than a mission station. For the time being church extension outside of the principal cities must be in Manitoba, the Territories and British Columbia. Before starting a new cause in any of the older provinces the Presbytery of the bounds should examine the census returns and see how the land lies in the matter of population. Half the people who are petitioning for the new cause may be in Manitoba in five years. Such things have happened, and are very likely to occur again. The crop of this year in the North-West will be certain to make a rush in that direction next March.

IT is gratifying to see that our ministers keep up the old Presbyterian habit of going to the roots of things. Nearly all those who have spoken on the political scandals have charged the sins right home upon the people of Canada, and have declared with emphasis that any real and lasting reform must begin with the people themselves. Others have "havered" about "party," and "the system of government," and the "press," and have recommended coalitions and changes in the law and various other remedies. The Calvinistic speakers go right down to the roots and say, reform the people. Clean people can have clean government. This is the only kind of discussion worth a straw in the present emergency. There is nothing to be gained by denouncing scoundrels whether major or minor. The boodlers do not attend church. Anyway the Ottawa and Quebec scandals are mere symptoms. The poison is in the body politic, and it may just as well come to the surface in the persons of McGreevy and Pacaud as in any other way. Let quacks treat the mere symptoms as quacks always do, a Presbyterian minister should go to the roots and deal with the causes of the disease. Presbyterian ministers are usually thorough men, and there is a good opportunity now to show once more how thorough they are. Treating the mere symptoms, denouncing individual boodlers, will no doubt be popular for a time with thoughtless people, but an educated, patriotic, thoughtful ministry must stand by the right and let the popularity go.

PAN-PRESBYTERIANISM.

GOOD counsels have evidently prevailed in the inception and management of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches. In the organization and direction of an institution virtually extending over the world there must inevitably be considerable difficulties to surmount. There are twelve millions represented who speak the English language, but there are eight millions more who speak with other tongues. To evolve harmonious purposes among a people who have many diversities is no easy task. And yet since the Alliance was organized no serious misunderstanding has arisen to mar the harmony of feeling or to impede the progress of the work it has sought to forward. As one of the speakers at the public meeting in Toronto last week remarked, it is evident that God had put it into the hearts of its founders to devise this method of presenting an impressive view of the substantial unity of Presbyterianism and of securing concentration of effort in promoting Christ's work in the world. It is a movement in harmony with the spirit of the time and suited in a measure to meet its need. The resolution to hold the next meeting in Canada was hailed