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TEMPERANCE LAWS.

THE new Canadian Temperance Act which is to come into general operation on the 1st May will be hailed with delight by all who have the welfare of our country at heart. In some of its provisions it may not be acceptable to all, but in reducing the number of licensed places, and in otherwise protecting the youth of the country from the temptations which now truly surround them, it will be recognized even by those who do not favor total abstinence as a great improvement upon the present laws. Everywhere of late the subject has attracted a great deal of attention, and in New York City and in other places the Church of England Temperance Society has asked for legislation very similar to that now soon to be operated in Canada. We hope there will be no miscarriage in enforcing the requirements of the new enactments.

THE EARLY BRITISH CHURCH.

No. 3.

IN previous articles we pointed out that Christianity was introduced into Britain, whether by St. Paul or by whomsoever, very early after the death of its Founder, and that the source through which it came was not Western or Roman, but Eastern or Asiatic. We traced the Church in Britain, as far as we were able, during the period of the Roman occupation, and up to and for some time after their evacuation of the country. We saw that it was a perfectly independent Church, having an Archbishop and Bishops of its own, recognized by the whole Church and being represented in her Councils, and having martyrs and confessors for the Faith.

So far we have seen, then, (1) that a Church existed in Britain long before the Anglo-Saxon period; and (2) that Augustine, with his forty monks, came to the heathen Anglo-Saxons, who had dispossessed the British of the country, and not to the British, who had been driven into Wales, who, if not all Christians, at least might be called a Christian nation in comparison even with Rome itself. No doubt much misconception has arisen from confounding these two periods in English history—the Celtic or Early British with the Anglo-Saxon. It is quite true that Augustine was sent from Rome to convert England, but England was then Anglo-Saxon, while centuries before his time and before the Anglo-Saxons came to England, there existed an independent Church in Britain—an Early British

Church—whose influence had Christianized, nominally, if not really, much of the Island, and whose Bishops and Clergy, driven into Wales by their enemies, subsequently took an active part in converting their Anglo-Saxon conquerors to Christianity. Historians tell us that while the Southern Saxons were converted by Augustine and his successors, the Northern and central districts were converted to Christianity by the efforts of missionaries of the Celtic Church. To understand the position of the two Churches and the differences between them we must refer to Bede's account of the Conference between Augustine and the British Clergy. We do not know the names of the Welsh Bishops who were invited to the Conference, but according to Bede those who attended were probably the Bishops of South Wales, of Gwent or Monmouthshire and Brecknockshire, of Morganwg or Glamorganshire, of Dyfed or Pembrokeshire, with part of Caermarthenshire. We are told that while Augustine was prepared to make large concessions, on four points he felt he must stand firm. Accordingly he proposed that the British Church should (1) conform to the Roman custom as to the mode of reckoning Easter; (2) the use of trine immersion in Baptism; (3) the Roman tonsure; and (4) accept the authority of the Bishop of Rome and aid in evangelizing the heathen English. What the concessions were which Augustine was willing to make we do not altogether know, but the points which he insisted upon were considered with the others of so much importance that after a long and heated discussion no agreement could be reached; nor did anything come of another meeting, to which Bede says, "besides the Bishops of South Wales there came the Bishops of Llanbadam, of Bangor, and St. Asaph." At this second Conference Augustine, it is said, was stirred to anger at their refusal to adopt the changes he advocated, and at their defiance of his authority. Unsuccessful in the object of the Conference, Augustine returned to Canterbury and there continued his exertions to evangelize the heathen around him; while the British Bishops went back to their homes in Wales to continue, in their own way, the work of subduing their Anglo-Saxon heathen conquerors to Christ. Internal strifes and fierce and bloody wars between rival chiefs and neighbouring kings prevented much headway being made either by Augustine's successors or by the Welsh Church in evangelizing the heathen Saxons, and for a time it seemed as if the Faith of Christ would be plucked out of the land before it had well taken root. But God ordered it otherwise, and we find that gradually through the efforts as well of the British and Irish Churches as of the Church of Augustine, one after another of the Kingdoms became obedient to Christ. Of the two bands of devoted men who had been employed in the conversion of England, the Roman was by far the smaller, and the Celtic the larger body. Between the two the old differences as to the time of keeping Easter and other matters continued, and, as Christianity spread, much interfered with a good understanding between their converts. Thus, while Oswy, King of Northumbria, was celebrating Easter according to the custom of the Celtic or British Church, his Queen observed it according to the Roman rule as taught her in Kent, from whence she had come, and was still practising the austerities of Lent. These differences show how

tenaciously the Celtic Churches held to their opinions and practices, and how much importance they attached to them. At Whitby, in 664, a council was held to decide the matters in dispute. Colman, on behalf of the Celtic Church, urged the uninterrupted descent of their tradition from St. John, but the King favored the other side, and Colman with his adherents quitted the Kingdom, he himself returning to Ireland, and those of the British Church to Wales.

Speaking of the King's decision, the historian, from whom we quote, himself favoring the position taken by the King, says:—"At the same time we ought not, in common fairness, to detract from the great debt of gratitude we owe to those Celtic pioneers, whose unceasing labours had so large a share in the conversion of our land." Shortly after this, at the consecration of Ceadda, his consecrator, Wini, Bishop of Winchester, to observe the requirements of the Nicene rule, that there should be three consecrators, obtained the co-operation of two Bishops of the British race, so Bede tells us, probably from Cornwall, who laid their hands on the new Northumbrian Bishop. Speaking of this, Bright says:—"This consecration illustrates the position of the See of Canterbury in the Church of England at this time, and shows that it had not as yet come to occupy the unquestioned position of mother and mistress of English Sees, a position which neither the mission of Gregory nor the seat of Augustine had been sufficient of themselves to obtain for it. The combination of agents in the scene there witnessed by the Church people of Winchester was specially interesting and appropriate. A prelate consecrated in Gaul, joins himself with two prelates of a different rite, representing the old Church of Alban and Restitutus, of Dubricius and David, in the consecration of one who sat as a boy at Aidan's feet, and had but very lately, it would seem, given up the British and Scotie observances."

THE WITNESS OF A VISIBLE UNITY ESSENTIAL.

WE had occasion some weeks ago to refer to the remarkably clear statement of the learned Presbyterian Professor, Dr. Milligan, on the subject of a visible unity among Christians; and his lecture on the subject is of such value as showing how earnest and learned minds in other Christian bodies are coming more and more definitely to see its importance and necessity, that we publish some striking parts of what he said, and commend the extracts to the attention, not only of Church people, but also of Presbyterians and others.

He says:—"The slightest glance at the New Testament is sufficient to show that in founding what He called 'the kingdom of God,' or 'the kingdom of heaven,' in the world, our Lord contemplated more than dealing with men as individuals; He aimed at constituting a community, a Church. What we have at present, however, to do with, is the relation in which the resurrection of our Lord stands to her (the Church), and more especially to her institution and her mission in the world. This has hardly, if at all, been dealt with in the theology of our Presbyterian Church. Yet it occupies a most important place in the teaching of the New Testament. The Church is a witness of the risen Lord. It is not enough to say, There is the Bible, of which the Church is the guardian and keeper. The Bible is a book; it is not in itself a living thing. . . .