

## THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

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Edited by Rev. Wm. Inglis.

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WE ask the forbearance of our correspondents and contributors. We do our very best to give insertion to accepted communications at as early a date as we possibly can, but, after all, we fall behind. A good many papers which we should have liked to have given in this week's issue we have had to hold over for want of space. They will appear in due time.

## THE LATE HON. GEORGE BROWN.

AS all our readers are aware, the Honourable George Brown died at his residence, in this city, on the morning of the 9th inst., after a painful and somewhat protracted illness, caused by his having been shot in the thigh by a discharged employé some six weeks ago. Over the death of very few Canadians, whether native or adopted, has there been so much and such genuine sorrow felt and expressed as over that of Mr. Brown. The manner of his death, and the whole circumstances in which he has passed away have no doubt greatly intensified the wide-spread and heartfelt sympathy which has gone out to his family and relatives from men of every class and of almost every character throughout the Dominion and far beyond. The case has been, in all its details, one so deplorable and so touching that it could not but have awakened deep sorrow, most genuine sympathy and most righteous indignation, even though a much less prominent person had been struck down. But when to all this is to be added the fact that it has been one of Canada's foremost and most influential citizens who has been thus brought to an untimely end by a miserable assassin whom he never injured, whom, in fact, he did not even so much as know by sight, it is not surprising that the lamentation should have been so peculiarly great, and that the Hon. Senator should have been laid in his grave literally amid the honest tears of very many all unaccustomed to the melting mood. In any possible circumstances, however, Mr. Brown could not have passed away without causing a very great amount of excitement, and calling forth very wide and very heartfelt sorrow. For the last thirty years his name has been in Canada more of a household word than that of any other except perhaps the great rival who still survives him. He has made his mark indelibly on the country of his adoption, and even those who have opposed him most earnestly will, we believe, when the heats of political warfare have passed away, and death with its calming and purifying influences has intervened, be as ready as others to acknowledge that that mark has been upon the whole for good. The Canada he leaves is a very different country in every respect from that which he found when as a mere stripling he made his way to it nearly forty years ago. We should be far from seeking to attribute to his single influence and energy all the social and religious changes, or all the political ameliorations which have taken place in this country during these years. But no one can for a moment deny that his part in that work has been a very marked and a very influential one, and that it will stand second to none when the time comes quietly and judiciously to apportion the praise and blame which individuals may have justly earned in the

course of that struggle which has transformed Canada from an obscure, despotically-governed, non-progressive, and, upon the whole, rather uninviting Province, into the wide, fair Dominion of to-day, with its constitutional rule, its ever-growing wealth, its thorough educational system, its perfect religious and social equality before the law, and its wide-spread reputation for the fertility of its soil, for the energy and industry of its inhabitants, for its attractions as a home to the struggling poor, as well as to the man of capital and enterprise, and for the promise it gives of becoming at no distant day the "Greater Britain" of this western world, with all which that phrase implies. It does not lie within our province to write a history of that struggle, or to trace the course which Mr. Brown pursued during those eventful years. The time has not yet come for that being done, and though it had, the columns of THE PRESBYTERIAN would scarcely be the appropriate medium for the attempt.

Over this new-filled grave very many will bow with quiet sorrow and with heartfelt regret for a valuable life having been, as they may fancy, prematurely cut off before its work was fully accomplished. Others, while they sympathize as much with the bereaved, and are as indignant at the miserable cause of all this wide-spread sorrow, may come to the conclusion that Mr. Brown's public work has been fairly and somewhat fully rounded off, and that while no doubt a mighty blank has been made in Canada's public men by his removal, there remained not very much more for him to accomplish except in that indirect yet guiding influence which age, with an experience such as his has been, could not help exerting on the men and measures of another generation.

With Mr. Brown's departure, however, there comes, let men think of him as they please, substantially a new era for Canada. Men have complained of what they called his dominating and even crushing influence, and some, possibly, even of his political friends may have been restive occasionally under his overshadowing power. Now that he has gone all will acknowledge that according to his light he was anxious to advance his country's interests by making these identical with what truth required and what honesty and fair-play would endorse and commend. Any who may have fancied themselves hampered by his superior energy or hindered in their plans by his dogged and indomitable force of will, will now have an opportunity of shewing what they can do, and if, in the end, the work they accomplish shall be fairer, brighter, better, and more beneficial than his who has passed away, Canada will reap all the benefit and will be as ready, as in this case, to reward the work and the workers with no stinted praise.

A man of such undoubted force of character as Mr. Brown certainly was could not help provoking bitter hostility, as well as awakening heartfelt enthusiasm and loyal attachment. But even already, some of his bitterest and most uncompromising opponents are acknowledging that while they believe he was often in the wrong, and generally mercilessly and often unjustly severe upon those whose proposals he controverted and whose arguments he criticised, yet in all he was an honest, straightforward opponent who might sometimes use a bludgeon instead of the orthodox rapier, but who never resorted to the silcketto, and never, even in moments of the greatest excitement, hit below the belt, or Joab-like smote under the fifth rib, while words of friendliness were on his lips and the kiss of brotherhood was used to conceal the meditated treachery to his friend.

He came to Canada a poor, unfriended, unknown young man. He has been laid in the grave amid the honest regrets of both friends and foes, after having been acknowledged for a generation one of the most prominent and influential Canadians of his time, if not the most prominent and most influential. He had a fair field, but he had no favour, and if he outstripped most of his contemporaries in the race, may it not be concluded that it was because he had pre-eminently those characteristics which are indispensable to successful exertion, and which, when the favourable opportunity presents itself, enable the possessor to seize that opportunity with avidity and to turn it at last to an unquestionable and successful issue.

The young men of the present day may say that there is no opportunity for repeating the experiment. Is there not? The man of faculty will always find the opportunity or make it. If he does neither, he might be better employed than in trying to hide his failure by depreciating those who have certainly managed to do both.

## IS GENERAL MORALITY FALLING OR THE REVERSE IN CANADA?

WE have often been asked this question, and have often, in turn, put it to those who from social position and official experience might be expected to know the facts with some measure of accuracy. The replies have been very varied, and, in some cases, altogether conflicting. Yet on certain points the consensus of opinion has been such as to lead to the conviction of its substantial and general accuracy.

It seems altogether beyond reasonable doubt that drunkenness is very encouragingly on the decline within the Canadian Church as well as beyond its pale. Some may, of course, think it strange that this vice should be spoken of as within the Church at all, or that drunkards should have any standing there except as penitents. This may be all true, but, as a matter of fact, there is no sin which could be mentioned which has so lowered the tone of religious sentiment and feeling in all Churches as that implied in the immoderate use of intoxicating beverages, none which in actual experience has been found more difficult to deal with, and at the same time none calling more frequently for the active interference of the office-bearers of the Church. We are persuaded that almost every minister in the Presbyterian Church in Canada, as well as those of other bodies, could testify that in the course of their ministry they have had more cases of discipline arising from this cause than from all others put together, and in addition more heart trouble and anxiety from more of the same kind which they could not exactly bring up for discipline, but in which they felt morally certain that things were going gradually, but surely and most distressingly, far, far wrong. Every one knows that before there is evidence sufficient in many instances to justify formal inquiry or the institution of a process of regular discipline, the ruin has become all but complete; while the usages of society have been, and to a good extent still are, of such a character as to lead individuals to resent as officious and quite unnecessary meddling on the part even of ministers, any friendly warning which might imply that the proper limits of sobriety had been at all overstepped, or that there was any danger of drunkenness ever being associated with their names. In many cases, ministers have had to say to themselves, "Now that man, and that, and that, are substantially drunkards or in the fair way of becoming such; yet, what can I do? They soak and tinkle and occasionally get somewhat elevated, while the drinking habits are eating out of their hearts everything like religious earnestness; yet, according to the current conventional code, they are sober men and would resent the most distant hint of there being any rock ahead against which it was well for them to be on their guard." Now, if one were asking, "Is there as much of this as there used to be?" we think the general answer would be decidedly and thankfully in the negative. There is still far too much of it in all its various phases and stages, still too much for ministerial comfort and for prosperous spiritual Church life, but it is on the ebb. The present generation of young Canadians within our Churches, and without, are, as a rule, soberer than those of the last, and are becoming always more and more so. The everlasting guzzle that was thought indispensable to hospitality is disappearing, and saints and sinners are alike coming to the quiet conclusion that the less those calling themselves Christians have to do with making, selling, or using intoxicating liquors so much the better. This is a token for good which many a wearied, worried, mortified pastor has to acknowledge with devout thankfulness.

The same thing has to be said of the general observation of the Sabbath. No doubt, there is at present a considerable outcry on this subject, and with a great deal of reason. Many efforts are being put forth by small but noisy knots of individuals in order to secure a relaxation of Sabbath laws and the general profanation of the Sabbath hours. But after all has been said, is it not the fact that never were the great and manifest advantages of Sabbath rest and quiet more fully recognized by the people of Canada and more taken advantage of than they are to-day? Things are not yet as they ought to be, by any means; but the fishing and shooting and kindred forms of Sabbath profanation are not, considering the increase of the population, nearly so common or so offensive as they were twenty or thirty years ago.

In the matter of profane language there seems also