

The Canadian Independent

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BOAT RACING.

If the daily papers are a correct reflector of the life and feelings of the people, and we imagine that such is the case, there has been an immense amount of excitement on this Continent as well as in England and Australia over an event which took place last week on the Thames, London—a match for what is termed the Aquatic "Championship of the World." We have used the term excitement, that is really hardly strong enough, for if we are to believe a fair percentage of what we heard and read, it was a complete craze. So far as regards boat-racing considered by itself we have nothing to say against it. Like Lacrosse or Cricket, or other Athletic Sports, if not followed to excess it develops and strengthens the body, and believing that a sound mind is largely dependent upon a sound body, we would welcome all pursuits that make for that result. That it is followed to excess, that your professional sculler is often over-trained, that the tension is too great, and that disease and an early grave are the results, is well known. We are not however writing on the physical aspect of boat-racing, but we desire to say a word or two on what have become its moral surroundings. We say have become, implying that it was not so at first, though neither we nor anyone else we imagine, ever heard of a boat-race free from the great vice of gambling, if ever it was free from other evils which it rarely is, such as fraud, deceit, conspiracy and such villainies. If one half of what we have heard of the amount of betting on this late race be true it is such a revelation of the gambling spirit amongst us as to be really alarming. We are told of clerks in Banks and other establishments clubbing to make up a sum to cable to England to be used for that purpose—of men who have madly risked every dollar they possessed on the chances of the race, of property being mortgaged and jewels being pledged for the same purpose—and it was confidently said by those who professed to know, that if the result had been different, more than one well-to-do man in Toronto would have been ruined, and that many others would have been pinched for a long time to come. Of course if a thing is wrong it is no matter whether it is done on a large or a small scale, if it is wrong to steal, it is as wrong to steal a cent as a thousand dollars, we only mention these facts to show how wide-spread the evil apparently is. Betting is gambling—gambling is attempting to get another man's money without giving him anything for it; true, he has the chance of getting your money and so it is resolved into the category of chance, or it may be of roguery. It is allied to the old duel idea, two men took the chance of killing the one or other and called it satisfaction, but the law at last stepped in and called it by the ugly name of murder, then it became unfashionable, and has so nearly died

out that any casual affair of the kind is branded as foolery. Let gambling in any of its shapes be made penal, and it would follow duelling as it richly deserves to do. In the meantime it cannot be too strongly impressed on the minds of the young men of our country that gambling is essentially dishonest, it is two men trying which is the most cunning or shrewd that he may steal from the other. Gambling is a fascinating vice, it has not the repulsiveness of drunkenness, but it is intoxication of the mind and heart. Just as certainly as the cup holds its victims, struggle against its thralldom as they will, so does gambling hold with the grip of an iron hand he who has once ventured within its charmed circle. Standing lately before a large painting by Gustave Dore, of a gambling saloon at Baden-Baden, we were struck with the power the painter had displayed in depicting the results of this passion in the faces of those gathered together—old men and young men, old women and young women, of various nationalities evidently, and of different social positions, but all exhibiting the power of the vice, its irresistible influence over them. It may appear a trifling thing to make a small bet in a friendly way so it is said on a boat race, but it is a step in the downward course whose end is written in tears and blood, and so far as this world is concerned can be seen in the jail, in the lunatic asylum, and the refuge for the destitute. It is a suspicious circumstance on the face of it that the head quarters of betting are to be found at saloons, if you want to hear of a "pool" you will likely hear of one there, if you want to find the "odds" you will have no difficulty there. The saloon keepers know their business, and are wise in their generation. Of course we do not mean to say that every one who bets resorts to a saloon, or that it will inevitably be followed by larger speculations and obtain the mastery of the man, but we do say that this is its tendency, and more than that this has often been its course. Let then our young men, especially those who are in any way identified with the Church of Christ, keep free from the danger—Leave bets and betting and all species of gambling to what is termed the "Sporting world", and a very sorry world it is, you can find better employment and purer enjoyment in the thousand ministries of life. Many a man has cursed the day when he laid his first bet and perhaps won, and would give his right hand to blot out its effects on his life.

Since the above was written a paragraph has appeared in the daily press stating that hereafter all betting at race courses will be prohibited in Prussia. This is a step in the right direction.

THE TRIENNIAL COUNCIL AT ST. LOUIS.

The National Congregational Council began its Sessions in the Pilgrim Church at St. Louis on Thursday last. Over four hundred and fifty members were present, a body of men second to none in dignity, influence and wealth. One prominent inscription wreathed on the walls of the church indicated the extent in time and territory placed to Congregationalism in this Country.—PLYMOUTH ROCK—1620—1880—THE GOLDEN GATE.

Above the arched windows were the names of Congregational pioneers, —Robinson, Cromwell, Owen, Hooper &c. Dr. H. M. Dexter of Boston, was unanimously chosen on the third ballot, moderator. He is the well known editor of the Boston "Congregationalist" and author of several works of permanent value on Congregational history and polity. The Rev. A. Hanney, with whom some of our Churches have lately made a personal acquaintance, was there and is thus described by one of the St. Louis papers. "About sixty years old, snow white hair, full of wit, pathos and eloquence. He holds every ear when he talks, and his audience is alternately in tears and in laughter." The Rev. T. M. Post of St. Louis, gave the address of welcome, he appears to have seen St. Louis first in 1833, "a little village, recently a mere hamlet stockaded against the Indians," since then, a city, whose streets in the dread civil war witnessed contending hosts on pavements slippery with blood, now growing in peace and plenty, as only American cities seem to grow. "The address was full of fire and vigorous sentiment, we cull a few passages. Of the principles held by the Churches of our order it speaks as "holding a faith once delivered to the Saints, descending from Christ and the Apostles, attested and witnessed by hosts of Confessors and Martyrs and Saints in other days, baptized and consecrated in tears and heroic blood, vindicated in the dungeon, at the stake, on the scaffold, in the high places of the earth in ages past, transmitting that faith immediately down through the ages, hiding it may be now for a time from history, gliding like the fabled Aethusia under the water of the world, but flowing on unmixed by and by to spring up in some distant clime, some far off desert, living on and propagating this faith, this symbol, which we call Evangelical.—Principles that live in filial piety, not in idolatry of the fathers; that enable us to revere and treasure and utilize and build upon the results of those that have gone before, preserving things most sacred and most beautiful, but that keep us from being like to the idolatrous and foolish children of Israel, gathering the collected things to work them into a golden calf; principles that however they may wall themselves round with forms, formulas, with book, with dogma, however they may garrison themselves round with great and holy memories, never convert the walls of defence to a prison, and never permit their champions to become jailors—but rely upon living things and present forces for maintaining the life of Christianity in the world—let us feel that we are here under a present Christ, a living Christ, and a living God. Unto that present Christ, who is to us light and life and love, let us look with thankfulness."

In the evening session following the welcome, the opening sermon was preached by Dr. Herrick of Boston, from Luke XI. 29. "Sign seeking was and is a curse. An evil generation surely; that was, whose whole character and religion and daily study could be condensed and made perpetually memorable in a few words—they seek a sign! and any generation that comes to emphasize signs, and rests in them rather than in the things signified in the eternal expressions of religion; its forms and

phrases, its doings and its noise, rather than in the reality itself, is an evil generation, it merits the terrible upbraiding of the Master. "Woe unto you ye hypocrites."

The following words deserve to be most prayerfully pondered by those who are most truly desirous of making our Congregational principles more largely prevail in our Dominion. We have nothing sacramentarian or ritualistic, no majestic machinery of government, we boast indeed as little organization as possible. We depend solely on the gospel which we hold forth in word and life, for the propagation of our tenets. Therefore our system is most excellent or it is most execrable. *If it have not the faith, the indwelling of the Spirit of God, it has nothing.* Other systems if they have not life may preserve its semblance.—But Congregationalism cannot die decently. It has provided itself beforehand with no grave clothes.—Other churches may be corpses, but corpses rolled in linen, embalmed in sweet smelling spices, but the corpse of Congregationalism is but a corpse, cold, odious, repulsive. By as much as it is most excellent in its normal and vital development, by so much is it most worthless when reduced to its lowest terms."

The Secretary, Rev. Dr. Quint presented his report, a summary of which may tend to keep up the spirits of many faint-hearted ones among us who are despondent because of our difficulties. During the last three years 334 new churches have been organized; 169 dropped from the roll, a net gain of 165, making the total number of churches represented through the Council 3,674. The membership reported is 383,000, a net gain of 17,325. No diminution in the amount of money raised and a gain in Sunday School attendance of 15,560 persons. May our Canadian Churches emulate and attain to a like record. Brethren, up and be doing. God grant it.

RESIGNATION OF REV. J. B. SILCOX.

A meeting of the Western Congregational Church Toronto, and congregation was held on the evening of the 10th inst., to consider the resignation of the pastor, the Rev. J. B. Silcox. After devotional exercises, deacon Flint was called to the chair. He stated that their pastor had tendered his resignation on Oct. 24th, in order to take charge of the Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba. At a largely attended church meeting on the following Monday evening the church voted unanimously not to receive the resignation, and appointed a deputation to request Mr. Silcox to reconsider the matter and withdraw his resignation. A request to remain had been sent to Mr. Silcox signed by all the teachers of the Sunday-school, another similar request from the members of the Bible class, and another from the Band of Hope. A meeting of the congregation had also been held and a deputation from their number and waited on the pastor requesting him to remain amongst them. The Deacons also as one man, had strongly urged Mr. Silcox to continue in the pastorate. Mr. Silcox had yielded to these desires of his people and had consented to withdraw his resignation. But after reconsidering the whole matter he had notified the deacons that he felt convinced that it was his duty to undertake the work in the North-West, and asked to be relieved from the pastorate for that purpose.

Mr. Silcox was called on and gave an explanation to the church. He reviewed