

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

\$2.00 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE.

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Edited by Rev. Wm. Inglis.

TORONTO, FRIDAY, JUNE 18, 1880.

THE ASSEMBLY.

ALL are united in their expressions of satisfaction at the manner in which the business of the Church has been transacted during these past days in the Assembly at Montreal. The work, it is declared, has been done thoroughly, and yet with very praiseworthy despatch. Mere speech-making has been at a discount, and the slightest attempt at individual dictation has been unknown. Too often, in times past, the first days of the supreme ecclesiastical Court used to be consumed in very profitless discussions which often threatened to degenerate into something very like mere wranglings. The result of this was that the actual business of the session had to be rushed through with indecent haste, when many of the members were already away and all of those present were anxious to go. At the present meeting it has been very different, for from the first, business has been systematically and persistently taken up and disposed of, not without due discussion, but without vague and pointless and interminable talk. It has in short been a happy, profitable and peaceful meeting. There is one thing specially noticeable and gratifying as well. We refer to the fact that even at this early stage, the component elements of the Assembly are so thoroughly amalgamated that it would be impossible for any one to mark the original dividing lines or to raise any possible issue which would resolve the united body into its constituent elements. In the Canadian Presbyterian Assembly, at any time, there is neither "Right" nor "Left," neither "Mountain" nor "Plain," neither "High" nor "Low." There have been of course points on which individuals have felt keenly and on which they may have expressed themselves warmly, but the associates in one discussion and vote very likely came to be the opponents in the next, and the equally zealous coadjutors once more in those which succeeded. The Church throughout all its borders will we trust every day feel more fully the beneficial influence of this state of things, and will go forward to its great proper evangelistic work with ever quickening zeal, ever gathering power, and ever accumulating resources. As more than one of the members of Assembly remarked, never had a Church a more extensive, nobler or more worthy field of labour for Christ than that which lies before the Presbyterian Church in Canada to-day. It remains to be seen how the work so evidently assigned to her shall be performed. The indications are encouraging in no ordinary degree, and prayerful, united and sustained effort will realize more than even the most sanguine may now anticipate.

IS IT RIGHT?

WE deprecate anything like officiousness, and have no desire to intrude into matters properly to be regarded as private, either in the wider or more restricted sense of that word. There are, however, proceedings and assemblies which, though conventionally of this character and therefore generally regarded as "privileged," have a certain character of publicity about them, and may so far, therefore, be noticed and discussed as public property. We are of opinion that entertainments of a more or less public description, whether in honour of a man, or in the promotion of a political party, or in celebration of some epoch or incident in the history of an educational institution, are of this description, and are therefore fairly amenable to public criticism, if anything be said or done at any of them calculated either to scandalize the feelings or injure the morals of a portion of the community. This, we take the liberty of saying, is being frequently done by the manner in which intoxicating liquors are used at most of such entertainments. Is it, we respectfully ask, a right and proper thing, for instance, that the close of the Uni-

versity winter course, as well as that of others which could easily be mentioned, should be so celebrated as to result in some of the students as well as others of the guests being more or less intoxicated? For years upon years past this fact has been a common talk and an acknowledged scandal, yet no one has cared to say anything about it. Its very commonness has been its excuse, though a most inadequate and preposterous one. Once and again have we heard gentlemen of the highest integrity and the most unquestionable veracity say that they would never go back to such meetings because of what they had both seen and heard at them. Nor was the last of the kind, we have been assured, either different or better. We are not careful to have it scientifically settled when a man may be properly called drunk; but this we affirm that at almost all of such meetings there are too many instances of what is neither creditable nor proper in the ultimate condition of some of those present, both old and young. Is this right and proper? Is it a becoming example to be set before the young or the lowly? Is it a proper branch of education in which to initiate our "ingenuous youth." Who shall say with how many lads these same entertainments, with toasts and wine *ad libitum*, have been the sure precursors of absolute and total ruin? Of course we know very well how the barest hint at such things will be denounced as "fanatical" and "scandalous" and how "maw-worm," or some equally favourite and elegant a brickbat will be thrown with affected contempt at our devoted head. But all that is of very small importance and most easily discounted. In this matter we court no man's favour and as little fear any man's frown, when we assert that a radical reform is needed in the way of conducting such *gaudeamus* whether they be disguised under a pretended zeal for the honour of some departed genius, or set on foot for the celebration of some political victory, or it may be for the encouragement of so-called intellectual "culture." It is a matter of no consequence whether they are intended to shew due hospitality to distinguished visitors, or to mark with triumph the educational progress of the land. In all, the same baneful example is given in favour of those drinking usages which are wrecking more characters and laying desolate more homes than any other agency which could be mentioned; and it is too bad that even the youth at our schools and colleges, as well as those in our counting-rooms and warehouses, should be encouraged in such ways by the presence and proceedings at these drinking meetings of their seniors and superiors who certainly ought to shew them a better example and lead them in a more excellent way. We merely hint at such things in the meantime, and we do so with great regret. To talk of the Scott Act being enforced and of sobriety being diffused among the lowly while such guzzlings and toast drinkings proceed unchecked and unremarked on among the educated and even the quasi religious classes, is a fond delusion, fast hastening to something little better than the broadest farce.

Of the thirty-seven graduates of the class that graduated lately from the Union Theological Seminary, New York, seven are going as missionaries to foreign lands.

THE poor tried wife of the Czar has at last got free from all her earthly sorrows. Perhaps a sadder, more desolate-hearted woman than she was not in all the wide extent of the empire of which, ostensibly, she was the first lady. Why talk of the immorality among humble folks when those in the first ranks, like this Emperor Alexander, set all decency so ostentatiously at defiance, and apparently are thought not the less of either by priest or courtier?

"GOOD HEALTH," a monthly magazine devoted to hygiene, says: "That alcohol is a necessity in any department of human science is fast becoming an exploded idea. Not only is the medical profession in its highest circles now seriously debating whether alcohol is absolutely essential in the materia medica, but advanced science is taking still higher ground and asserting it totally unnecessary in any case, a terrible injury to mankind, a deadly poison, the production of which should by powerful legislation be at once arrested and forever prohibited. We hail the aid which enlightened savans are proffering the good cause of temperance as auguring the overthrow of the most monstrous evil under the sun."

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES.

HISTORY OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK. (A. S. Barnes & Co.)—Part VIII. enters upon President Washington's second term of office.

THE INTERNATIONAL REVIEW, June, 1880. (New York: A. S. Barnes & Co.) The International Review is always a welcome visitor. The present number is a fully average one. The articles of most general interest are, one by Wilkie Collins on the International Copyright question, very tart but very truthful, and another by Walter Chamberlain on "The Lessons of the General Election in Great Britain and Ireland." The latter takes up three points as specially settled by the recent election. (1) That the beer interest is not nearly so powerful as it was thought to be, for though its weight was all thrown into the Conservative scale, the defeat was as overwhelming as it well could be; (2) That "society" Englishmen and metropolitan newspapers have but little influence on general public opinion and even little knowledge of how it tends; and (3) That the English people as a whole have little sympathy with "Jingoism," but greatly prefer their chances of "peace and prosperity" at home to "gunpowder and glory" abroad.

IMMERSION: (1) Not the Only Mode of Baptism; (2) Not a Scriptural Mode at all, but an Invention of the Church of Rome. By Rev. W. A. Mackay, B.A., Woodstock, Ont. (C. B. Robinson, Toronto, 1880.)—We are glad to see that Presbyterian ministers are making increasing use of the press in the defence and propagation of the truth most surely believed among them. Among other recent publications the one whose title we have given above, by Mr. Mackay, of Woodstock, deserves a wide circulation and careful perusal. We are deeply convinced that such publications are much needed at the present day, for there is truth in what Mr. Mackay says about the "ordinance of Christian Baptism in its nature, design, mode and subjects not receiving the attention in our Presbyterian pulpits which its importance demands, especially in view of another fact that our people are being constantly assailed as to the Scriptural warrant of our practice." However praiseworthy the reluctance shewn by Presbyterians to engage in controversy, that reluctance when carried too far is apt to be both abused and misapprehended. If any doctrine is worth the holding, it is worth the defending in every proper way, and surely Presbyterians most fully believe that the doctrine of their Church on both the mode and the subjects of Baptism is at once so Scriptural and reasonable as to deserve to be held with all tenacity, and to be defended with the greatest confidence and vigour. We commend Mr. Mackay's pamphlet as a timely contribution. Our Baptist friends about Woodstock and elsewhere sometimes seem to have adopted the idea that their views on the subject of Baptism are so buttressed by reason, learning and Scripture that nothing worth while can be advanced on the other side, while their expressions on the subject as quoted by Mr. Mackay and others are too often characterized by a greater amount of vigour than of good taste and Christian propriety. We are quite sure the Presbyterians of Oxford can give a very good account both of themselves and of their doctrines whether on Baptism or anything else. They don't seek controversy, but we are confident that when it comes, they won't go out of their way to avoid it. No more catholic or kindly Christian man than the late Rev. Dr. John Brown, of Edinburgh, could easily be found, or one more inclined to live in peace and harmony with all the different sections of the household of faith. Yet even he was occasionally led to say when his Baptist neighbours and friends became rather too persistent or somewhat offensively arrogant, "A little learning and a little piety will sometimes make a man a Baptist. A little more learning and a little more piety will generally bring him back again." There was a good deal of both truth and point in the remark when Dr. Brown first made use of it, and it has lost neither by the lapse of years.

A MEETING was lately held by a portion of the Presbyterian congregation of Durham who are opposed to the introduction of instrumental music into the church, and they have decided to petition the next Presbytery, that meets in Durham in July, to form a separate congregation, as they believe their number and influence sufficient to support a minister themselves.