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Toronto, May 2, 1895.

Prohibition Commission.

AFTER having occupied much time in taking evidence, and in studying it, the Royal Commission has reported against the total prohibition of the liquor traffic. It is what has been expected from the beginning, yet the evidence contains facts upon facts and opinions upon opinions which would lead the unbiassed reader to a different conclusion from that arrived at by the majority of the commissioners. The blue book is a bulky production of three volumes and a mastery of the contents require time and patience, but the social and moral reformer will be repaid by a careful study of the collected facts.

There is a minority report also. Rev. Dr. MacLeod did not agree with his colleagues. A terrible indictment indeed does he bring against the excessive use of alcohol:—"There is no room for differences of opinion in regard to the fact that intemperance and its inevitable train of harmful consequences constitute one of the most formidable evils that afflict society, diminish the wealth of the country and impede the progress of civilization. The fact is universally admitted. Regarding it, the commission did not deem it necessary to prosecute extensive enquiry. In Canada, as in other lands, intemperance is the prolific cause of pauperism, disease, insanity, idiocy, excessive mortality and crime, with all the suffering and sorrow which attend these conditions. . . . Whatever evidence relating to pauperism was heard in the course of the Commission's investigations in the United States was in agreement with the foregoing statements that nearly all of it is traceable, directly or indirectly, to intemperance."

Dealing with the effect, physically, of the drink habit Dr. MacLeod gives the following remarkable instance of medical opinion in Toronto. The question "'is total abstinence in your opinion compatible with the fullest degree of physical health?'" was one submitted to two hundred and seven medical men in Toronto by the Secretary of the Dominion Alliance, but the commission declined to receive the statement in reply. Ninety-two replies were received and the question was answered directly in the affirmative in eighty-three cases, and of the remaining nine only three expressed a definite opinion that total abstinence was not safe for most people, and even they did so in a very hesitating fashion. . . . Of 1,555 Canadian physicians 1,068 said that the general health would be improved by total abstinence. Of 1,340 who gave definite answers to a question about moderate drinking

901 said that the use of intoxicants even in moderation is injurious to health and to an active condition of body and mind. Of 779 physicians a large majority said that the use of intoxicants increases the number of the insane."

Dr. MacLeod's report is ably drawn up and the facts he makes use of are handled with skill, precision and considerable convincing power, and it ought to prove useful in the hands of advocates for total abstinence and prohibition.

Paid Choristers.

Among the overtures which will come before the General Assembly which will meet this month at Dallas, Texas, is one from the Presbytery of Macon, which has called forth some pithy comments in the religious press. It is on a "live" subject and is in the following terms:

That your venerable court will take into its consideration the fact that in many of our churches a practice has arisen of using professional and hired singers for the purpose of giving musical performances as a part of the public worship on the Lord's day, and for which no authority or permission is given in the Directory of Worship of our Church.

The effects of this innovation are to interfere to a large extent with the privilege of the people in singing the praises of God; to violate the simplicity of the forms of worship which has always characterized our Church; to distract their minds from the true objects for which the people come together in God's house; to introduce the element of entertainment rather than assist in the worship of spirit and truth; and to lower the tone of the sacred exercises of devotion to the level of worldly and questionable amusements.

Besides which, the influence of these practices is to bring discredit upon the preaching of the doctrines of the Cross, which is the only divinely prescribed way for the Church to win the attention of sinful men, and to place the ministry in a doubtful position as to its adaptation for securing this most important result.

These serious considerations, as well as the waste of money involved, and the trouble and anxiety which many of the pastors and sessions realize in dealing with the developments of this practice, influence this Presbytery to overture your venerable court that you make such deliverance as will tend to correct the evil, either by pastoral letter or otherwise, as in your judgment may seem best.

Honan Mission.

Letters from Honan, state that deserting soldiers are forming themselves into bands, pillaging and murdering their helpless countrymen. Should peace prevail and the Chinese army be disbanded—possibly without pay—the consequences are greatly to be dreaded. This is peculiarly a time when special prayer should be offered in behalf of our missionaries, and indeed of all missionaries in that great and troubled empire.

Religion in Public Schools.

An experiment has been tried in Connecticut with respect to religious exercises in public schools worth relating. Not long ago the Board of Education decided to abolish all forms of religious exercises. Public opinion did not approve that step and the Board met representative clergymen from all denominations to consider the question. There were Protestant and Roman Catholic clergymen present. The result of a harmonious meeting was the recommendation of the Lord's prayer found in Matt. vi. In parallel columns we give the Lord's Prayer as found in the King James Version and in the authorized Roman Catholic Version: