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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 28, 1883.

T. H. CONTRIBUTES to this week's PRESBYTERIAN another of his admirable letters from Europe. The subject, he says in his introductory sentences, will be so many of our readers only an unsuggestive name, and they will pass on to something else. If they do they will, we assure them, make a great mistake. Old and young will find the letter on "Port Royal" most interesting and instructive reading.

REFERRING to our statement that a good discussion of the question of time-service in the eldership cannot do harm, the New York "Evangelist" says:—

"We assure our Canada brethren that, on the contrary, it will do good, especially if followed up by judicious action, such as was taken by our own Assembly. The change was not imposed on a single church, but liberty was given to all of them to fix the term of activity of their elders, and so far the innovation has worked well. It is to be said, however, that very many of our churches have not availed of the discretion granted them, but adhere to the old system of permanency in office on the part of elders."

A GREAT many of our readers will be interested in learning that Dr. Barnardo, of the Children's Homes, London, England, purposes sending out about 150 boys and girls, suitable for farm, domestic and other services, towards the end of May or beginning of June. Already many applications have been received for the above children by Mr. Geo. Trenaman (Dr. Barnardo's agent), who desires to complete the list of applications at once, to ascertain the exact wants of the people desiring the children's services, that every satisfaction may be given to farmers, tradespeople and others who may apply. Last year a party of fifty boys were sent from these Homes to this land, who have been satisfactorily placed in Ontario.

PROLONGED discussion always comes down to first principles. The main question at issue now between the Presbyterian Church North and South is: Has the Church a right to make political deliverances? Both parties are willing to withdraw everything offensive that has been said in the past, but many in the North are not willing to admit that under any circumstances the Church should not give a deliverance on political questions. Their contention is that the Church discharged a duty in denouncing rebellion and treason. Brethren in the South contend that the Church as such should in no circumstances interfere with the affairs of the Commonwealth. In support of this contention they quote from chapt. 31 sec. iv. of the Confession of Faith:—

"Synods and Councils are to handle or conclude nothing, but that which is ecclesiastical; and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs which concern the Commonwealth."

Supposing one of the Provinces of this Dominion were to rebel. And supposing the rebellion were suppressed with very little bloodshed, and everybody was happy again, would it be unconstitutional for our General Assembly to make a deliverance, thanking God and congratulating the country on returning peace and prosperity? Does the Church violate her constitution by saying anything about the Commonwealth?

THE reports of congregational meetings this winter are for the most part very favourable. We have rarely, if ever, seen so many balances on the right side. Many of our congregations are doing nobly for the schemes of the Church. We expect to see good reports from all Committees in June. Does this increased liberality necessarily imply increased spirituality? Doubtless increased liberality in giving for the Lord's cause is

one evidence of increased spiritual life. It would be gratifying to know that other evidences exist as well. Supposing a congregation gives this year twice as much for missions as it did, say two years ago, it might be well to ask has the attendance upon ordinances also increased? Is the prayer meeting better attended? Is there a larger proportion of communicants at the Lord's table? Do the people enter with increased zeal and devotion into spiritual exercises? Are the Sabbath school teachers more active? Is there more life in the prayer meeting? Do the people work and pray more, and quarrel less? There is a possibility that a congregation may look upon itself as a financial corporation, and conclude that all is well because the balance sheet shows prosperity. Money is important, but money is far from being everything. Whilst thankful for the Christian liberality manifested in many places, let all work and pray for a baptism of the spirit.

Is there no rich man in the Church who will come forward and give the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund a lift? We are doing fairly well in regard to the other schemes. The Mission Funds are prosperous, and the colleges will soon be endowed. The Widows' and Orphans' Fund is in a healthy state. Can nothing be done to make a decent provision for our aged and infirm ministers? The amount paid by the Church at present for the support of men who have worn themselves out in her services is simply disgraceful. We occasionally hear eloquent perorations about the "Church of our fathers," the "blue banner," the "blood of the martyrs," and all the other fine things about which we feel proud. Does it ever occur to the orators and those who cheer them that some of the men who planted the "Church of our fathers" in this new world and upheld the "blue banner" bravely and well for many years, are trying to keep soul and body together in their old days on two hundred dollars a year! Well, would it have been for some of them had they lived in martyr days. To die at the stake, and go home to heaven in a chariot of fire, is a grand thing compared with living on the retiring allowance of a Presbyterian minister in Canada. Is there no generous wealthy man who will come forward with a princely gift for this fund? Shall it be said that there is not even one such man in the Church? Heaven forbid, but it seems so!

RAISING THE FALLEN.

AMONG the many institutions doing a quiet, effective, Christian work must be ranked the Toronto Prisoners' Aid Association. It seems destined, in the present condition of things, that prisoners, like the poor, we will always have with us. The proper treatment of this unfortunate class is both an interesting and intricate problem. Its solution has been approached by the most diverse thinkers, and the suggestions offered have often been wild and impracticable. While moralists may spend much time in theorising on the best methods of punishing and restraining crime, active Christian workers are leaving theories very much to take care of themselves, and following in practice the footsteps of Him who went about continually doing good. It is really difficult to strike the golden mean between the harsh and heartless methods in which those imprisoned for crimes have often been treated in the past, and that sickly, sentimental codling of the very interesting prisoners over whom dilettanti philanthropists have shed copious tears. It is, however, extremely desirable in the interests of Christianity, the unfortunate criminals themselves, and the hard-working poor who continue law-abiding citizens, that the criminal offenders should not be made special pets. Nor is it less desirable that those who have come under the tempter's power, and who have followed, it may be, strong hereditary proclivities to wrong-doing, should be treated in a spirit of Christian kindness and consideration. The one aim should be to help the fallen who desire to retrace the evil steps they have trod, and afterward to live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty.

This is the special work The Toronto Prisoners' Aid Association undertakes, and has in the past been instrumental in accomplishing. The ninth annual meeting of this excellent but unobtrusive society was held last week, and from the annual report submitted we learn that faithful work has been carried on with an encouraging measure of success, considering the

more than usual obstacles to be contended against. Special services have been maintained by the Association in Toronto Gaol, at the Central Prison, and the Andrew Mercer Reformatory. In the last named institution, access to the Refuge for Female Children enabled those engaged in teaching to reach an interesting class of inmates. The society employs an agent who actively carries out its purposes, as the following interesting summary will show:

"During the year, I have obtained employment for 243 discharged prisoners. I have given meals and lodging to a very large number, relief to families, and distributed 225 articles of clothing. I have provided 24 men with tools, etc., to enable them to go to work, and distributed about 11,560 tracts. During the same time I have paid in the interest of discharged prisoners about 700 visits. The office record shows the names and address of about 80 discharged prisoners now living in the city, of whom about 25 may be said to be doing well and leading consistent Christian lives. From correspondence with those who have left the city, I have abundant proof that the influences for good which they received while in prison here, has not passed away."

The need of a better classification of prisoners is very much felt. Provision ought to be made for keeping separate the older and more hardened criminals from those just entering on the down grade. The young are but too susceptible to contaminating influences; and hoary criminals only too often glory in their wicked exploits, and many of them enjoy the hateful pleasure in destroying the better impulses of their young but erring and involuntary associates in prison. Our prisons and reformatories ought not to be in any degree colleges of crime where perverted youth may graduate.

The active and self-denying workers in this arduous though not unpromising field of Christian benevolence, are worthy of a much wider and more generous support than they have hitherto received. The work is catholic in object, aim and membership. A more active interest on the part of Christian people, not only in Toronto, but throughout the country, would make this deserving institution a power for good; it would be a still more efficient means in preventing crime, reclaiming the erring, and saving souls from death, thereby covering a multitude of sins.

UNHAPPY IRELAND.

RECENT developments show how deep rooted is the discontent of a large portion of the people in distracted Ireland. The long list of agrarian and other outrages culminating in the startling barbarity of the Phoenix Park murders revealed a state of things that shocked humanity. For a time it seemed as if all law, human and divine, was set at defiance, and the difficulty of bringing home to justice the guilty parties was so great that anarchy seemed to triumph. The long delay that elapsed, before any clue could be obtained likely to lead to the apprehension and conviction of the murderers of Lord Frederick Cavendish, and Mr. Burke, created an uneasy suspicion that the miscreants, who perpetrated a crime of such atrocity, might not only escape, but emboldened by immunity be led to commit similar outrages. It is now tolerably certain that those implicated in that horrible deed have been tracked and are now in the toils of justice. When first up for examination the accused were defiant and reckless. They indulged in unseemly levity. But that is changed. Their betrayal by guilty comrades has overwhelmed them with consternation. First the driver of the car turned Queen's evidence, and revealed many minute particulars known only to an eye-witness of the awful crime. No sooner was this surprise sprung upon them than one of the actors in that terrible tragedy turns round and corroborates the testimony of Kavanagh. Councillor Carey makes a clean breast of the whole affair, and throws additional light on the webs of conspiracy woven in darkness and participated in by desperate men. The mystery of iniquity is now laid bare.

The state of Ireland must occupy the attention of statesmen for a long time to come. Were all conditions favourable from this time onward, there would be sufficient to tax the energies and resources of legislators, to call for wisdom and patient application for a lengthened period; but unhappily the state of matters in Ireland is too disturbed to expect its speedy pacification and a return to a settled and orderly condition. Wrongs have existed for ages, and though these may be gradually redressed the relentless hatred they have occasioned will continue to rankle in many minds. Within recent years it has been the aim of enlightened statesmanship to