

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

PUBLISHED BY THE

Presbyterian Printing & Publishing Co., Ltd.,

AT 5 JORDAN STREET. TORONTO.

Terms: \$2 Per Annum in Advance.

ADVERTISING RATES.—Under 3 months, 15 cents per line per insertion; 3 months, \$1 per line, 6 months, \$1.75 per line 1 year, \$3. No advertisement charged at less than five lines. None other than unobjectionable advertisements taken.

The Canada Presbyterian.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25th, 1889.

WHEN the University of Toronto conferred the degree of LL.D. upon Sir John Macdonald and Mr. Mowat it was said by many that the universities had been headed off. The two most prominent and most popular men in the Dominion had been made Doctors and there was nothing more to be done in that line. When Queen's "laureated" the Governor-General last week it had to be admitted that the youngest graduate of the Presbyterian University was at least officially higher than any other graduate in the Dominion. It is not so easy to head off a Presbyterian institution under the management of a man like Principal Grant.

IN the death of the Rev. Dr. Williams, senior superintendent of the Methodist Church in Canada, that Church has lost one of its most devoted and faithful labourers. He was not only highly esteemed in his own communion but was deservedly respected for the excellence of his Christian character and the friendly feelings he manifested to other branches of the Canadian Church, to our own in particular. He was always ready to lend a helping hand wherever good was to be done. As a forcible and earnest preacher Dr. Williams' rank was high. The men who did the laborious and enduring pioneer work of the Churches in Canada are being taken home one by one, and the number that remains is getting less as the years go by.

ABOUT twenty years ago Mr. Sandfield Macdonald, then Premier of Ontario, withdrew the government grant from Queen's and Victoria. We well remember seeing men who supposed themselves wise shaking their heads and saying, "That's the last of Queen's." In some cases the wish was the father of the prediction. The withdrawal of the grant was really the best thing that ever happened to the old institution. It put the friends of the college on their mettle and when Presbyterian people are put on their mettle they always make something go. People never know what they can do until they try. Does any one suppose that if the friends of Queen's had been depending, even in part, on a government grant for the last twenty years it would occupy the position it does now? The moral is obvious. Sanctified self-reliance is a better thing for a college, a church, or a congregation, than outside help. Queen's is a thousand-fold better institution than it would have been under government patronage, and the people who gave the money are the better for having given it.

IT is not true that all elderly men are pessimists who mourn over the departure of the good old times and insist that the world is constantly growing worse. Reviewing some of the events of the last fifty years at the jubilee last week, Dr. Reid stated that he believed the world was better than when he first knew it. Gladstone, looking at the world no doubt from a different standpoint, said that he would rather live during the last fifty years than any fifty since the world began:

If I had to select, from the beginning of the world down to the present time, and so on to its close, the fifty years in which I would pass my active life, I would choose the half-century in which I have lived, because in that half-century there has been the emancipation of slaves; there has been the emancipation of the restrictions upon the Catholics; there has been the emancipation of all the restrictions upon the Corn Law; there has been the emancipation of the voter from restrictions upon suffrage. It has been fifty years of emancipation, and the only half-century of which that can be said.

Advancing years bring many drawbacks but there is none sadder than the sourness which leads some old people to think that in spite of the Gospel and the gift of the Spirit the world is constantly growing worse. The worst feature of such cases is that the man always considers his pessimism evidence of superior piety. Usually it is evidence of the reverse.

WE learn with regret from our exchanges that in several municipalities—notably in two western cities—prominent municipal men decline re-election, and first-class business men refuse to become candidates for municipal honours. This is greatly to be regretted. The sharpest election is better than stagnation. There is always something wrong when municipal and parliamentary honours go a-begging. Two things tend to keep good men from serving their municipalities. The unreasonable, degrading and insane practice of canvassing is one of them. Why should a man who is willing to give his time, and business ability to the service of his fellow-men be expected to go around and ask them for the privilege of doing so. Another good reason why many good men decline to enter public life is because too many Canadians think their only duty towards a public man is to kick him. Nobody expects thanks for serving the public, but there are good men who decline to be made targets for abuse. The people have themselves mainly to blame for the unwillingness of many good men to take a hand in the management of public affairs. In the end they always pay the penalty. The penalty usually comes in the form of bad streets, bad police protection, jobbery in municipal affairs and heavy taxes. Blackguardism in the Council never pays.

THE Dominion Alliance meeting was held in Toronto last week, and interesting discussions on various phases of the temperance question took place. There are certain points in which all temperance workers are agreed. There is no difference of opinion as to the educative work that must be accomplished if the great evils of the drink traffic are to be lessened. Moral suasion must be unceasingly employed so as to convince the individual and raise public sentiment on a question concerning which the popular mind is by far too apathetic. It is when political action is concerned that irreconcilable differences come to the surface. It was in this connection that the keenest discussions occurred. The friends of Temperance do not belong to one political party. There are good and consistent men in the ranks of both parties. Some are of the opinion that they should all accept the platform of the new Third Party. There is an obvious disposition to utilize the cause of Temperance for party political advantage which has the effect of weakening the influence of the temperance reformation. In this, however, there is also diversity of opinion, some holding that the best way is to dicker in with the politicians, and to coerce them by wielding the Third Party club over their heads. While within the ranks the strife of tongues is raging, the plan not open to objection is for each one who desires to see the evil effects of intemperance stayed to live up to temperance principles and make principle and practice harmonize.

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN has no sympathy with the Plymouthism which teaches that Christian men should shun public duties and responsibilities. On the contrary we hold that the very best men in the country should be in parliament, on our municipal councils, and on our school boards. Of course there always will be special cases in which it may be the duty of a good citizen to decline civic work. Church work certainly comes first and if a man cannot serve his municipality without injuring his church we should say he ought to let somebody else serve the municipality. If his business is seriously endangered by public service, then we think he should decline. There is a more serious kind of an exception. Some men unfortunately find the temptations of public life too strong for them. In plain English, they find it difficult to resist the drinking customs that exist in most public places. Such men we think should not expose themselves to temptation. Outside of these and perhaps a few other exceptions, we believe every citizen should be willing to take his fair share of public duty. In no other way can we have good government. It cost our fathers a great deal to clear up this country. It costs us a good deal to run all its governmental machinery, and this journal will be the last to advise that the management of its affairs be handed over to brainless bar-room scallawags. Christian men have something more to do with a community than pay the taxes that scamps may pile on.

THE Herald and Presbyter says:

Christmas comes on Wednesday this year, and, as many churches hold their prayer-meeting on the evening of that day, the question is suggested, Is it not better to omit the meeting? We reply, By no means. Christmas Day is a proper occasion to meditate upon the life of Christ, and yet, after celebrating that day as most people do, it is not likely that

there will be a very large attendance. A better suggestion may be to hold the prayer-meeting on another night of the week. We do not like the disposition to omit the regular services of the Church because of conflict with holiday enjoyment.

Nor do we when they conflict with holiday enjoyment or anything else. The regular services of the Church should go on, no matter what else is going on. Omitting the prayer meeting because there is a lecture, or a Scott Act meeting, or concert or show of some kind, is a distinct lowering of the flag, and should never be done. If people do not attend, that is their own affair, and the responsibility is theirs too. The efficacy of prayer does not depend on the number present. This week and next a change can easily be made to another evening. The last evening of the year is a specially good evening for a prayer-meeting. Properly conducted, a religious meeting held during the dying hours of the year can hardly fail to be of tender and solemn interest. Never lower the flag. There will always be enough of God's children present to claim the promise. The modern theory that a "crowd" is essential to prayer, and that any kind of a crowd makes a good meeting, is utterly destructive to spirituality and dishonouring to God as well.

IN an admirable paper published in the Interior, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the American Church has this to say of the manner and spirit in which the religious journals have discussed the Revision question:

Since the meeting of the last Assembly our religious journals have devoted a large amount of space to the question of Revision. Many of the articles have been able and exhaustive; some have been earnest and pithy, affording valuable side lights from the view-point of experience; and a few have been extreme, better fitted to excite alarm than to solve the important question at issue. But all have breathed a true Christian spirit and an unquestioned loyalty to the Church.

Discussion that breathes a true Christian spirit and unquestioned loyalty to the Church never hurt a Presbyterian Church and never will. The harm is always done by men who are not loyal to the Church—who are Arminians or Plymouths, or something else in disguise, and who are Presbyterians and perhaps Christians in name only. Concerning the ministers and elders the Moderator has the following to say:

Nothing as yet has appeared to create doubt that our ministers and ruling elders have sufficient love for the Church and faith in our Calvinistic Creed to keep them from demanding any kind of Revision that will disturb our peace or impair our system of doctrine. Should the majority, or more, of our Presbyteries express a desire for the appointment of a committee to consider the wisdom of making alterations in the Standards, it will be done from no special dissatisfaction with their doctrines, but with a few unhappy statements and harsh expressions not involving the integrity of our system.

We have watched the discussion closely since it began and some time ago came to exactly the same conclusions. Never in the history of Presbyterianism has any member of the Presbyterian family approached a great question with more learning, judgment or a better Christian spirit than the American Church has approached this question of Revision. The truth is safe in the hands of our fellow-Presbyterians across the line. The golden mean will prevail in regard to any changes that may be made. Between the man who looks upon the Confession as an idol and the idiot who wants to change everything a year old there is always plenty of standing ground for rational Christians.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

IN the busy rush of life, with its cares, its struggles and anxieties there is to-day a grateful pause. The throbbing commerce of the world is not at an absolute stand still. It never is. Thousands of ships are afloat on all the seas. Railways are traversed by trains bearing burdens of freight and thousands of passengers, but the mass of civilized mankind the world over are bent on the enjoyment peculiar to the unique day of the Christian year. Travellers by sea and land, however, are not unmindful of the day and its cherished associations. On shipboard and in railway carriage there are jovial groups, whose members think kindly of the friends from whom they are temporarily parted, and settle themselves to have as merry a Christmas as circumstances will permit. Passengers in the cabin and sailors in the fore-castle will each in their own way have a merry time.

Amid the pressure of these modern days there is no danger of people generally making too much of home, with its pure and simple joys; and considering its importance as a prime factor in family, social and national well-being, whatever is calculated to bring it into prominence is deserving of commendation. Without saying a disparaging word of those who devote the first part of the day to religious ob-