

# THE WEEK.

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## CONTENTS OF CURRENT NUMBER.

CONTRIBUTED ARTICLES—	PAGE
Clerical Incomes.....	C. 459
One View of the Fishery Dispute.....	B. 460
Notes from Quebec.....	Nemo 460
The Story of the Upper Canada Rebellion.....	Thorpe Mable 461
Longfellow.....	Jeannette Duncan 461
Mr. Gladstone.....	Selected 463
TOPICS OF THE WEEK—	
The Fisheries Dispute.....	464
Knights of Labour and Trades-Unions.....	464
The Knights' Impossible Undertaking.....	464
The Knights' Financial Scheme.....	464
The President's Wedding.....	464
Home Rule and the Roman Catholic Church.....	464
Promises of the Nationalists.....	465
The Electoral Contest in Ireland.....	465
Mr. Gladstone and Imperial Federation.....	465
The General Election.....	465
NOTES.....	465
POETRY—	
Daphnis.....	Selected 466
To the Bobolink.....	Wm. Beattie 466
CORRESPONDENCE.....	466
TWO NIGHTS—Continued.....	Ren. 466
READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.....	468
LAWN TENNIS.....	L. C. 468
OUR LIBRARY TABLE.....	469

## CLERICAL INCOMES.

It is possible that the ordinary reader may pass over this brief paper as of no importance to himself. If these first lines should catch his eye, we will entreat the favour of a hearing. The subject in hand is by no means one which concerns the clergy alone, of whatever denomination. Doubtless, it concerns them as a class; but it concerns no less the whole body of the laity, who receive most of their religious instruction and influence from the ministers of the churches.

No one can doubt the profound influence which the clergy of any particular period exercise upon its religious life. And the importance of this consideration is not diminished by the corresponding truth that the clergy are themselves, in a great degree, the expression of the religious life of their time—no doubt in its higher forms and expressions, but still in such a way that the teacher is partially made by his age, even as he helps to make his age. We are members one of another. Each one partakes, more or less, of the life of the whole body.

If this is a true statement of the case—which will hardly be denied—then everything which affects the condition of the clergy, affects and should interest every member of the Christian Church, and, less directly, of our whole social system. An important place in this respect must be given to the subject of an adequate provision for the temporal needs of the clergy and their families.

Let some things be clearly understood at once. We are no advocates for overpaying the clergy, so as to enable them to live in luxury. Nor do we wish to see them entirely independent of their flocks. Partial endowments are good and useful; but we believe it tends to make the relations between ministers and people more living and sympathetic, that there should be the means of expressing the value which the people set upon the services of their pastor.

But these things are quite apart from the main purport of this paper. What we have specially to note is the utterly inadequate provision which is now being made for the ministers of the Christian Church, and more particularly, it is said, in the Church of England. If this is so, the matter is very serious, very terrible.

What must be the effect of this insufficient provision? Loss of power, loss of self-respect, loss of all those high qualities, intellectual and moral, which make the ministry of divine truth of any value. Let us grant that there are men who have the spirit of heroes and martyrs, who will increase in spiritual power as their outward man is crushed or perishes. All honour to them! They are the salt of the earth.

But it will not be reasonable to expect a spirit so exalted in the majority, even of those who have consecrated themselves to the high work of ministering the Word of Life. Circumstances will help to mould them as they mould other men, and they will be better or worse, as they are helped or hindered by their surroundings.

We venture to think that the clergy, as a rule, display an amount of self-denial which would be very surprising to the ordinary layman, if he were to become acquainted with it. Granted that some of them get into debt, and that a still smaller number of these take tortuous ways of meeting or evading their responsibilities. It is easy to find fault or condemn.

These men are not heroes or martyrs. But are those laymen heroic, who, amply provided with the good things of this life, make no effort to alleviate the distress of which they can hardly be unaware?

If they do not know this—if the laity are ignorant of the deep poverty of many of the clergy—they are only a degree less guilty than, if knowing it, they give no heed to it. If the gospel of Jesus Christ be true—and our argument is addressed only to those who believe it,—then they will have to answer for this to their Lord; and it will be a heavy reckoning when it comes.

A short time ago the Toronto *Globe* did a very useful work by publishing, under the head of "Pastors' Salaries," a statement of the amounts paid to the various ministers in Toronto. The heading of the statement ran as follows:—"The Presbyterian and the Methodist bodies the most liberal, and the Baptists and Congregationalists not far behind; the Episcopalians indifferently remunerated." We infer from the reports given of the incomes of the various ministers that the above summary is accurate, that the clergy of the Church of England are the worst paid of all the ministers in the city of Toronto.

The other day, the writer of these lines received from a Rural Dean of the Diocese of Toronto a few items of information respecting the incomes of the clergy in country places, which were very astonishing to the recipient of the information. A clergyman of the one Church of England congregation in a town of some size (containing a population of 4,000 or 5,000) receives \$600. Another, who has a wife and five children, receives \$800. Another, who has a wife and seven children, and has to serve six stations, and therefore has to keep a horse and buggy, has \$720. Another, who has a wife and family, has \$600. These were not instances gathered from a large area in which there were many others better provided; they were lying side by side, and represented the ordinary provision made for the clergy of the English Church in the locality to which they belong.

Are the well-to-do laity acquainted with these facts? And, if so, do they weigh their import? Do they reflect that, while the prices of most things necessary for actual existence are rising in this country, the stipends of the clergy remain the same; that the struggle for life is becoming, day by day, more arduous and more bitter? Do they consider what must be the necessary result of these things?

Young men are refusing to enter a profession which gives them no prospect of a decent maintenance. Others are crossing the border and transferring their ministerial labours to the United States, where, it appears, there is among the laity some sense of the importance of the sacred office, and some readiness to provide for the needs of those who fill it.

Some of the laity cannot understand this at all. To them it is very shocking that there should be such care for "loaves and fishes," and so little "love of souls." Yes, it is strange, is it not?—very strange to the wearer of "purple and fine linen" that those ministers of Christ should object to wear patched garments, or to see their children without shoes?

We do not plead for a luxurious clergy. We plead for decency. And it is indecent when the laity can spend profusely upon their persons, their houses, their families, and yet can look on and see the holders of the most sacred office on earth degraded and unfitted for their exalted work.

It is difficult to speak the simple truth on such a subject without seeming to be guilty of extravagance. There is not an Anglican ecclesiastic in Toronto (if we except one case in no way dependent upon the offerings of the people) who receives an adequate income. Let the wealthy laity of the diocese go through the list. Let them begin with the Bishop, who receives about \$4,000 a year, and has to pay all his own expenses of travelling, and has continually to put his hand in his pocket to meet calls upon his charity or his duty—let them begin here and go down through the list, and let them consider how they can satisfy their consciences on this subject, and how they will answer the Lord of the conscience.

It would appear that the other denominations, although in a better condition than the Church of England, are taking measures to wipe away the reproach of underpaying their clergy. We have no present means of following these endeavours. To whatever communion we belong, we must rejoice that all Christian teachers should be protected from that grinding penury which is destructive of self respect, and therefore of all real moral power. Unless our teachers can freely speak to us what they believe, and unless they can have perfect liberty in studying the truth which they proclaim, their ministrations must be comparatively useless. C.