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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 8th, 1888.

THE following paragraph from a recent article on Miracles, by Gladstone, in the current issue of the *Nineteenth Century*, has a direct bearing on the controversy in regard to prayer for rain, which has been going on here for the past few weeks:

The impossibility of miracle is a doctrine which appears to claim for its basis the results of physical inquiry. They point to unbroken sequences in material nature, and refer every phenomenon to its immediate antecedent as adequate to its orderly production. But the appeal to these great achievements of our time is itself disorderly, for it calls upon natural science to decide a question which lies beyond its precinct. There is an extraneous force of will which acts upon matter in derogation of laws purely physical, or alters the balance of those laws among themselves. It can be neither philosophical nor scientific to proclaim the impossibility of miracle, until physiology or science shall have determined a limit, beyond which this force of will, so familiar to our experience, cannot act upon or deflect natural order.

THE genial editor of the *Interior* is in a state of mind. The thing that troubles him is to keep on the fence during this presidential year. He says he resolved to "look not upon the right hand nor upon the left" until the election is over. "Pious patriots" are standing on each side ready to salute him with a club. Perhaps no religious journal in America steers clear of party politics more successfully than the *Interior*. We have read that breezy journal for many years, and have not the slightest idea of what its party proclivities are. Its conductors make a heroic effort to keep on the fence during election times. They are usually rewarded by being clubbed from both sides. Many religious journals lean just enough to one side to save a double clubbing. Most people think that a religious journal should have nothing to do with politics in the party sense of the work. That may be true, but to sit erect on the fence and get clubbed by both sides is a trying kind of exercise.

THE next best thing to travel is to read good books written by travellers. The next best thing to a holiday tour is to read descriptive letters written by tourists who know how to write. Our Canadian journals are a long way behind their American contemporaries in supplying their readers with this kind of literature. At this season of the year, American journals teem with racy, descriptive correspondence from sea-side and lake-side and mountain-top, and all other places where tourists do congregate. It is quite true that Muskoka, and Lake Superior, and the St. Lawrence, and other places of summer resort have been "written up" many times; but it is also true that a man who knows how to write can make them new every year. Dr. Cuyler can make Saratoga Water as interesting in his twentieth description as in his first. A considerable number of the people of this country take a holiday, but the greater majority have to stay at home, and the stay-at-homes enjoy a racy, description of the places visited by their fortunate neighbours. Two or three columns of well written letters from tourists might, with advantage to readers and publishers, take the place given in some journals to the sayings and doings of base ball players.

THERE seems to be great difficulty in conducting an Agnostic funeral service. The other day a leading Agnostic of New York City died and Colonel Robert Ingersoll officiated at his funeral. Agnosticism has no psalms, nor hymns, and the Colonel was forced to

fall back upon Newman's well known hymn, "Lead Kindly Light." Fancy a party of Agnostics singing this verse:

So long thy power has led me, sure it still
Will lead me on
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone;
And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile!

"So long thy power has led me" What power? An Agnostic knows of no such power. Colonel Ingersoll denies, blasphemously denies the existence of any divine power that leads men. How could he, or any other infidel or Agnostic feel sure that this power would lead them on "O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till the night is gone." For Ingersoll there are no "angel faces" and no resurrection morning, if his own creed is true. In pronouncing his funeral eulogy, Ingersoll said of the deceased Agnostic, "We loved you living and we love you still." How love him still? If Ingersoll believed what he professes to believe, the man had no existence. Agnosticism is a poor thing to live by, a worse thing to die by, and a funeral service conducted by Robert Ingersoll beside the coffin of a pronounced Agnostic, is as grim and imminent a farce as the world ever saw. Why honour Christian hymns and the Christian doctrine of immortality to make an Agnostic funeral passably decent.

ONE can easily understand why a considerable number of Methodist people wish the Stationing Committee to send them the ministers they "invite." They invite the minister because they want him, and when the committee does not send them the man they want, they are dissatisfied. That is the most natural thing in the world. None of us are satisfied when we don't get what we want. The trouble is easily enough understood, but how trouble can be remedied by putting laymen on the Stationing Committee is one of the puzzles that no outsider can comprehend. Suppose a Stationing Committee to be half lay and half clerical, could it then give every congregation the minister it wanted if, as frequently happens, two or three wanted the same man? Supposing the committee were composed exclusively of laymen, would that mend the matter? That the Methodist people will at no distant day demand the right to call their own spiritual advisers is, we think, as certain as any future event can be. No body of intelligent, independent people will, in this age, long allow a committee to select for them the man who preaches to them the word of life, and who, perhaps, knows more about their family affairs than any other man in society. They will insist on selecting the man themselves, more especially as they have to pay his salary. That they should do so is, we think, reasonable; but to say that putting laymen on the committees will remove the alleged grievance seems absurd. A committee of laymen could not give the people everything they want any more than a committee of ministers. The only real remedy is to allow the people to call their minister, and then if they don't get their man they have no committee to blame.

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

OF late, the United States press has been making serious complaints against Canada, because she gives shelter and protection to the steadily increasing army of defaulters who seek refuge from the punishment their crimes merit in their own country. This is a grave accusation, and one we are certain the mass of Canadian people would not voluntarily incur. Are they, therefore, to lie under the imputation, while the fact is that again and again both the British and Canadian Governments have signified their willingness to negotiate a much more effective Extradition Treaty than the one now in force, which permits many of the most dexterous rogues and criminals to slip through its meshes. The fault that dishonest American tricksters are permitted to reside in Canada is chargeable to the American people themselves, or rather to their politicians, who for reasons of their own, are ever ready to interpose when a better treaty is proposed; not necessarily that they have a sneaking fondness for criminal experts, but mainly for political reasons. At all events, several American journals are candid enough to admit that failure to abolish reciprocity in criminals is due solely to the action of their own government. Some of them

speak out with great plainness in condemnation of governmental neglect.

It comes, therefore, with poor grace when these same journals complain that Canadian authorities are remiss in their efforts to prosecute these grand larcenists for bringing stolen money into the country. Most Canadians will agree that all due diligence is shown in this respect, and where failures do occur they are accounted for by taking into consideration the influences that Americans are able to bring to bear in favour of their incriminated fellow-countrymen? Of course this remark is not to be interpreted as reflecting on the unsullied purity of the Canadian judiciary, which is not elective and cannot be purchased. The reference is solely to the fact that in some cases the friends of the inculpated are so wealthy and influential that they can secure the best attainable legal talent, and are able to avail themselves of the keenest ingenuity, so that no possible process should be left untried in order to secure the fugitive's escape. When the results of the hoodlums' trials in New York City are considered, and how the remainder of the prosecutions have been indefinitely postponed, the complaints of American journals are not quite so pertinent and well-founded as they might be otherwise.

Another count in the accusation is that the Canadian people are too ready to extend their most distinguished consideration to runaway Americans if they have plenty of money with them. In general terms, this also can be denied. Self-respecting Canadians do not consort with thieves, however much money may line the purses of the latter. They do not like to be seen in bad company. There are people in Canada, as everywhere else, whose tastes and morals are, say, questionable, who willingly become boon companions of any man as long as he has money to spend. They are not particular as to character. Perhaps this class is not altogether unknown, even at fashionable American summer watering places. Canadian society, no doubt, has its faults, but it is at least equally particular as the corresponding institution in the United States, regarding those to be admitted to its inner shrine. The warmth of the welcome extended by Canadians to conscienceless plunderers, would not in a single case be an inducement, did not fear of consequences drive the defaulters from the haunts of their crime. The most rigid Canadian exclusiveness would not repel the kind of men a loose extradition treaty permits to find shelter within our borders. The frequency and magnitude of recent defalcations has aroused attention to the necessity of finding a remedy. It may therefore be confidently expected that a better treaty will be framed and enforced and that honesty, if not between man and man, at all events between nation and nation, will thereby be promoted.

A leading New York paper has been figuring up the frauds that, by discovery and confession, have come to the surface. The aggregate is startling. In the United States alone, the amount embezzled during the last six months reached the sum of \$2,240,005. For the last ten years the ascertained defalcations were \$48,573,466, thus averaging at the rate of \$400,000 a month. These large figures do not by a long way cover all the stealing in that country. It is well known that petty pilfering is going on all the time. If trusted officers in monetary institutions, or in public positions are faithless, are the same characteristic traits not to be found in the clerk, the salesman, down to the message boy, whose stealings are simply commensurate with their opportunities? Various means have been suggested for checking this great evil. More stringent supervision, greater attention to detail on the part of employers and those responsible for the conduct of affairs are very properly urged. The multiplication of devices for detecting dishonesty and diminishing the opportunities for its practice might, no doubt, be helpful. The root of the evil is deeper than can be reached by any legal and artificial checks. A man is not necessarily honest because he has no possible chance to steal. If ingenuity is exerted to devise preventives of theft, a like ingenuity will be exercised by the dishonest to evade them. The only effective remedy for the crime that seems alarmingly on the increase must be a moral remedy. To be honest, a man must be honest at heart, in intention and in every act. We must cease scoffing at the scrupulously honest man who will not steal because the Law of God and his own conscience will not let him. We must also cease