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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21, 1886.

It may be interesting for members of Assembly, who have not yet decided how they will vote, to note the length of service rendered by each of the six esteemed brethren nominated. The genial Halil a doctor heads the list. He was ordained in 1847, and has thirty-nine years to his credit. Next comes Mr. Smith with thirty-three years. He was ordained in January, 1853. Dr. Laing crowds Mr. Smith closely having been ordained in January, 1854, seven days less than a year after Mr. Smith. His time of service has, therefore, been thirty-two years. Mr. McMullen comes next with a record of thirty years, having been ordained in 1856. In point of time these three brethren may almost be described as "bunched." Principal Grant has served twenty-six years, and Mr. Macdonnell twenty. Any one of these gentlemen has put in many an honest day's work for his Church.

THE Marquis of Hartington set a fine example the other day of the way in which a high-minded, honourable English gentleman treats his political opponents. Having mentioned the name of the Premier at a public meeting called to condemn the Home Rule Bill, it was met with a chorus of yells, catcalls, hisses, groans and abusive epithets. The Marquis, though strongly opposed to Home Rule, could not bear to see the name of his former chief treated in that way and rebuked the rowdies in this dignified fashion.

Gentlemen (he said deliberately, emphasizing every word and speaking with dignity and perfect self-control), I hope I may appeal to you not to make the task which I have before me more difficult than it is by indulging in any manifestations of disrespect to one whom I shall always admire and revere as the leader of a great party, who, in my opinion—I do not expect you all to agree with me—has conferred great advantages on the country; who at this moment, in my judgment, although I am bound to differ from him, is actuated by feelings as noble and as honest as any that have ever inspired the conduct of an English statesman.

Would that there were more Hartingtons in public life. Would that we had a score or more in our House of Commons. Had some men, we all know, been in Hartington's place they would have encouraged these ruffians in their blackguardism, and next morning the party journals would have laid the exhibition before the world as a marked manifestation of public opinion. They do things differently in England, that is the gentlemen there do.

SOME of the small army of students who go to the Home Mission field this month may think they have difficult fields to work. Some of the stations, no doubt, are difficult. No Canadian student, however, will have a station like one occupied by a frontier missionary of the American Presbyterian Church, who called at the office of the New York *Evangelist* the other day and gave a description of the locality in which he labours. The village is about a year old and has a population of four or five hundred. Within the past year there were four murders, three lynchings and four suicides. The missionary went five times to his preaching place when there was not a soul to hear him; once when there were two; once five; and once eight. No, we have no fields like that and we ought to be thankful that we have not. Our difficulties are

small compared with those of a village of four hundred people that has four murders, three lynchings and four suicides in a year. Our brethren of the American Church are fighting a terrific battle with many evils that happily we know little or nothing of. The work of turning the thousands that come from all parts of Europe into good American citizens and Christians is a hard work. The under current of Socialism, which, no doubt, exists and which breaks out occasionally, makes the work all the more difficult. We can wish the blue banner of Presbyterianism over there God speed without the slightest hankering after the stars and stripes. May these American sons of John Calvin conquer every foe in the Great Republic.

IN a debate on Indian affairs in the House of Commons last week Mr. Ferguson, M.P. for Leeds, referring to the Rev. James Robertson, Superintendent of Missions in the North-West, intimated that he knew something about Mr. Robertson which he would not state. Though promptly challenged by Messrs. Fairbank and Charlton to make specific charges against Mr. Robertson, Mr. Ferguson remained silent. The hon. member for Leeds must be singularly ignorant of the rules of conduct that obtain among men of character if he thinks this matter can remain as he left it. He said too much or too little. He must now either make specific charges against Mr. Robertson, or stand convicted before the people of Canada of using his place and privileges as a member of Parliament for the purpose of stabbing the reputation of Mr. Robertson behind his back. The matter is not now one between the member for Leeds and Mr. Robertson. It is between the member for Leeds and the Church Mr. Robertson represents in the North-West. The assault upon Mr. Robertson is aggravated by the fact that he was not present to defend himself, and had he been present he would not have been permitted to reply. The matter cannot rest here. Mr. Robertson must have what the poorest subject of the Empire has the privilege of defending himself. He cannot defend himself against mere insinuations. The member for Leeds must make his next move and make it promptly. If he does not we shall not fail to characterize his conduct as it ought to be characterized.

THE approaching election of members to the Senate of the University of Toronto is calling forth a good deal of activity this year. There are seven candidates in the field representing various phases of opinion in regard to University questions. The two main points at issue are increase of graduate representation in the Senate, and the attitude of certain graduates represented by the *Varsity* in regard to the affiliated colleges. We feel sure that the position of the *Varsity* will command no sympathy with those graduates who have an interest in Knox College as one of the affiliated colleges. No doubt the friends of the other affiliated colleges will have just as little sympathy with the *Varsity*. Many graduates may in a general way be in favour of an increase in the number of their representatives in the Senate; but we feel sure that if it is intended to use such increase in the manner advocated by the students' periodical, all those graduates who have interest in the affiliated colleges will oppose the increase. From recent letters of leading University men in the public prints there seem to be symptoms of danger in this connection, and it behooves all true friends of our Provincial University to move very slowly in regard to any proposed radical changes, till other and more important questions, such as University Confederation, are settled. We feel sure that prudence will dictate careful action on the part of the University graduates who are connected with Knox College, and that they will vote for men in whose views they have confidence in regard to these important interests.

THERE is every reason to hope that the ecclesiastical year now ending will prove one of the most successful in the history of the Church. There has been during the year a little friction in the running of the ecclesiastical machine, a little complaining, a good deal of criticism of one kind and another, but we venture to say that, when Dr. Torrance lays his report on the Assembly's table, it will be found we have more churches, more congregations, more mission stations, more ministers, more missionaries, more elders, more Sabbath School workers, more members, and more

money than we ever had before. The work goes bravely on. Presbyterianism in this Dominion is like the British drummer boy. It never beats a retreat. Owing to local causes, we may sometimes lose ground temporarily in a locality, but the loss is always or nearly always temporary. All congregations do not always grow at the same rate, but the Church as a whole always grows. A period of comparative dullness may come over the best congregations at times, but we have great reason to be thankful that no such period has yet come over the whole Church. If some congregations languish a little, others are more than usually lively, and thus we make a fair average over the whole. Anybody can say that the Church has not as much life as it should have or might have. That is easily said. The man who waits in that way generally does the least to increase the life. Let all begin the new ecclesiastical year with the honest determination to do the best we can, God helping us, for our beloved Zion. And let us not fail to thank Him for His goodness in the past.

THE Synod of Hamilton and London discussed the vexed question of supplying vacancies and appointed a committee consisting of Drs. Laing, Cochrane and Mr. Laidlaw, to co-operate with other synodical committees that may be appointed to consider the whole question and, could they accomplish the task in time, to report to the General Assembly. We are glad that effective steps are at last being taken. The present state of things is a scandal to the Church. Presbyterianism has always been a system noted for order. In regard to vacancies and probationers we are chaos. The question is difficult, but if manfully faced the difficulties can be overcome so far as it is possible to overcome them in any Presbyterian Church. Some of the difficulties are inherent in the system, and cannot be wholly overcome as long as our people have the right to select their own spiritual adviser—a right which they do not propose to surrender. We must just do here as we do every day in other matters—the best we can. The fact that we cannot have a perfect system is no reason why things should be allowed any longer to run loose. Perhaps the best way to succeed would be to adopt Gladstone's method in regard to Ireland. Let a good, practical committee mature a plan, and come down with it at the Assembly and say: Here is our plan if you have a better one produce it. Let it be understood all round that everybody is bound to contribute something himself to the settlement of the question. What do you suggest yourself? should be the question asked every man who says somebody else's plan is not good. If every man who finds fault were forced to answer that question we would soon have a different face on this and several other questions.

**NUMBER ONE.**

MAGNIFICENT passages on the duty of self-sacrifice are to be found in the writings of all great Christian teachers. No matter to what section of the Church they belong, they vie with each other in lauding the beauty and glory of renunciation. The Roman Catholic points forcibly to the desert anchorite, to St. Simon Stylites, to Francis d'Assisi. Our modern preachers become glowingly eloquent on unworldly devotion to religion and philanthropy. Even the hardest-headed and most unsentimental worldlying does not fail to see an attractive beauty in a noble and unselfish life, devoted to the cause of righteousness and the good of humanity. During their lifetime such shining exemplars of self-renunciation may be looked upon by some as amiable fools, but after death their names are enrolled among the world's worthies.

Between the admiration and exercise of self-denial there is too often a marked divergence. We all admire the virtue, though too generally our preference is that others should practise it—not we. The spirit of exaction is strong, but graceful concession is very beautiful and becoming in other people. The people who are for ever standing on their rights are not always indisposed to encroach on those of their neighbours. Some make themselves both miserable and ridiculous by fierce quarrels over trivial misunderstandings that a little common sense and mutual forbearance would render impossible. A petty dispute between neighbours often assumes a degree of bitterness that ultimate burdensome legal expenses do not tend to allay. Each contestant admits it is not the value involved in the disagreement but the principle,