

NOW READY.

THE PRESBYTERIAN YEAR BOOK FOR 1892.

CONTENTS:—Frontispiece—Photogravure Portrait of Rev. Thos. Ward-rop, D.D., Moderator of General Assembly—Calendar—Officers and Committees of General Assembly—The Moderator—Home Missions, by Rev. W. S. McLavish, B.D.—Foreign Missions—Presbyterianism in the North-West, by Professor Baird—The Presbyterian College, Halifax, by Rev. Robert Murray—The Duties and Responsibilities of the Eldership, by James Knowles, jr.—The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, by Rev. S. Houston, Kingston—The Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund, by J. K. Macdonald—Sketches and Engravings of St. Andrews Church, Kingston, St. Pauls Church, Peterborough, and St. James Church, Prince Edward Island—Rolls of Synods and Presbyteries, etc.

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The Canada Presbyterian.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1st, 1892.

IF twenty-seven members of the Presbyterian Church, twelve of them ministers, and among the twelve the Moderator of the General Assembly, secured legislation for Queen's University other than that they were authorized to secure, and failed to report the fact to the Supreme Court, it is high time the Assembly had looked into their action.

THE correspondent of the *British Weekly* says that when he attended the late meeting of the Congregational Union of England there was a "sense of unpleasantness in the air" and he had "a feeling of miserableness." We hope the members of our General Assembly have no feeling of that kind this week. Why should men meeting to do the Lord's work have a feeling of miserableness?

THREE or four hundred men, no matter how good they are, can never do difficult work with much deliberation, especially if any of the work happens to be of an exciting nature. It is almost impossible to make a good court of a public meeting. The General Assembly will increase rather than diminish in numbers, and will grow unwieldy as it grows large. The right thing is to give it less to do. A large body should deal with large questions and with these only. Small issues are often much more irritating than large ones.

VIEWED even as a matter of policy it is doubtful if the Protestants of Ulster, or rather those who assume to speak for them, are wise in threatening to take up arms should Home Rule be given to Ireland. Everybody knows that spirited Englishmen and Scotchmen despise a threat. If they cannot be persuaded to vote against Home Rule they can never be frightened into voting against it. Lord Salisbury's inflammatory appeals to the Orangemen are utterly unworthy of a British Premier. He would not risk anything himself by taking part in the proposed rising and he should not invite others to risk their property and lives in any such enterprise.

WHEN the General Assembly of the American Presbyterian Church decided to meet in Portland it was supposed by many that some veteran Home Mission man on the Pacific coast would be honoured with the Moderatorship. To an outsider that would have seemed a natural and handsome thing to do, but the Assembly put a professor from Danville, Kentucky, in the chair. The Assembly knows its own business, and the new Moderator is said to be an admirable man, but all the same one cannot help thinking that the election of a Home Mission Moderator on the Pacific slope would have been in accordance with the fitness of things, more especially as the last Moderator was also a college man.

IN this country of ours and even in the Presbyterian Church it is always or nearly always taken for granted that if a pastor gets a call to a

larger place, even if the congregation to which he is called is not more important than the one he is asked to leave, that the call will be accepted. They do things differently across the water. Dr. Stalker has declined to leave Glasgow and go to Marylebone, London, and the Rev. Mr. McDonald thinks it his duty to remain in his present position in Scotland, though invited to the pulpit of Regent Square in the World's Metropolis. It would add more than a little to the dignity and usefulness of many a pastor if people did not suspect that he was ready to run to any kink of a city congregation that might beckon to him.

THE cost of a General Assembly is a serious matter. We have heard the figures given repeatedly as well up among the thousands, but as we have no way of verifying them at this moment we do not care to come down to particulars. Is there any reason why a General Assembly should meet every year? Supposing matters not involving questions of doctrine and polity were taken in hand by the Synods, there would not be, so far as we can see, any reason why a General Assembly meeting every two years should not meet the wants of the Church for some time. Be that as it may, the first and most pressing duty is to clear the Supreme Court of much of the business that goes on its docket—we say on its docket, for that is the only place where much of it does go. Most earnestly do we urge members to do something in the way of cutting down the docket so that business may be done and done with something like deliberation, dignity and decorum. Could any man who sat in the last Assembly come away with the impression that even all important matters received the calm consideration they should have received? What shall we say about matters that were not considered at all?

OUR genial old friend Bro. Mutchmore, of Philadelphia, allowed himself to be nominated for the Moderatorship of the American Assembly the other day. Bro. Mutchmore, as many of our readers know, is editor, and, we believe, proprietor, of an excellent Church paper and has done splendid service for Presbyterianism with his pen and types. His election was sought by some as a recognition of the services rendered by the Church press—services, by the way, that no General Assembly could overestimate, for the press of the American Presbyterian has no superior in the world. On the first ballot Dr. Mutchmore got 83 votes out of a total of 544, and on the second only 48, when he withdrew. We don't suppose Dr. Mutchmore cares a straw about Moderatorships, but his friends might have known very well that honours of that kind never come to an editor. An editor might work for his Church a thousand years, each week of the thousand doing excellent service, and with one paragraph make enemies enough to get himself beaten by any lobbyisting nobody who never missed his dinner for Presbyterianism or any other good cause. Never mind, Bro. Mutchmore, you and all the other editorial workers will get justice in that General Assembly in which the rewards are justly distributed.

THE question of supplying vacant pulpits in all denominations, except the Methodist and Episcopalian, is becoming so difficult that one is tempted to ask whether, after all, the calling of ministers by popular vote is the right method. In the American Churches the system is little better than a scandal, and there is too much reason to fear that in this, as in some other things, we are becoming like our neighbours. The *Interior*, in a vigorous article, calls upon the General Assembly to do something effective and do it at once. Our contemporary says:—

Every vacant Church that is self-supporting is besieged by applicants. Even upon the rumour of impending change, letters begin to come to the Session soliciting an opportunity to "supply your pulpit for one or two Sabbaths when the way is clear." Some write for themselves, and some get influential friends to send their name with a recommendation. Before the pastoral relation is dissolved, there will be perhaps a dozen or fifty names proposed for the place. The Church begins to feel very important. They are going to have the pick of all these ministers who are so anxious to come. They hear candidates one after another. The more they hear, the more they don't know what they want. Every man that comes will make some friends. Some please the young folks. One set in the Church wants a man just like the last pastor, and another set wants a different sort of man. Some won't vote for a minister who reads his sermon. Some want a good plain gospelizer, and others want a ministerial dude. The cases are not rare in which congregations become so divided and demoralized under the strain of this process as to be permanently injured. And as to the poor unfortunate "candidates," who are weighed in the balances and found wanting, they go away humbled and mortified and discour-

aged, and wonder whether they have not made a sad mistake in thinking that the Lord had called them into the ministry. The Moderators of Sessions in vacancies on this side of the line could no doubt tell the same story if they wished to do so. The fact is the system has completely broken down. After hearing fifty candidates a congregation may be in a worse position than before it heard one, and it may then call a man not nearly so good as any one of twenty that might have been chosen out of the fifty. General Assemblies seem afraid to tackle the question.

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN has never been in favour of pulling up young ecclesiastical plants to find out whether they are alive and taking root. We never advocate change for the sake of change. Letting well enough alone is, in our opinion, a safe rule in ordinary circumstances. This conservatism, however, is not Bourbonism. Churches should learn something as the years roll on, and if our united Church has not learned in seventeen years that the General Assembly has at least about twice as much work as it should have and the Synods not half as much as they could very well do, then we fear that the Church will never learn anything. Why in the name of Presbyterian common sense should ministers and elders be assembled from every point between the Atlantic and Pacific to do business that can be done just as well by a Synod? The climax of absurdity is reached when you see grey haired men travel thousands of miles to refer something "to a committee to report at next Assembly," or worse still, to lay something on the table. We do not wonder that men who travel from British Columbia or Prince Edward Island to Toronto or Montreal to attend to matters of vital interest sometimes become impatient. They could scarcely be called Christians if they didn't. Just fancy a man travelling three thousand miles at great expense to somebody to spend his time on matters that could easily be disposed of by any local court. The remedy is just as visible as the sun on a clear June day. Take at least half the present business out of the Assembly and assign it to Synods and let the Assembly meet say once in two years.

THE ROMAN CHURCH AND EDUCATION

THE Roman Catholic Church is deeply interested in popular education. That interest is most keenly manifested in Protestant countries. It has a great deal to say as to how elementary schools are to be managed, and is by no means diffident as to the character of the claims it persistently advances. The zeal of its ecclesiastics on behalf of national education is not impervious to criticism. The question whether it is education for its own sake or as a means of advancing the interests of that particular Church is an open one. The priesthood, who have no children of their own to educate, are very anxious that other people's children should be trained in accordance with their own peculiar notions. Where they have the field to themselves the same eager zeal for popular education is not conspicuously apparent. Spain and Portugal, Belgium and Italy, before its unification, could make striking displays of illiteracy. The South American Republics, where the Roman Catholic Church has so long been dominant, are not remarkable for the diffusion of popular intelligence, the result of efficient training in their elementary schools. A recent motion in the British House of Commons to restrain Irish illiterate from the exercise of the franchise does not in any way indicate a high degree of popular education in a country where the Roman Catholic Church could control the public schools in accordance with its own desires. Only in countries where the people are alive to the advantages of education has the Church of Rome much to say on the question of its management, and there if it cannot secure its control it is resolved upon keeping up a ceaseless agitation.

The aim of Romanism in educational matters is to obtain a controlling influence in its management and to secure for its schools a measure of State support. Never yet has it given assent to any system of national schools that seeks only to impart the elements of a secular education. Neither would it accede to any other Church the right to impart religious instruction at the national expense, though it would not be averse on such condition to take care of the religious education of the young itself. The result has been that in countries where Romanism has been possessed of numerical influence there have been unsatisfactory compromises, as in our Canadian Separate School system. The hopeless nature of the problem has given a strong impetus to the modern idea that the business of the State is simply to pro-