

do not think it just that a slanderous and false accusation should be cast upon those who mourn their loss.

I may add that our own congregation has had its share of loss along with the general community. Some of those with whose faces we were familiar in our church services were among the slain at Duck Lake. Five of the nine killed were wont frequently to worship with us, though one of these did not belong to our Church. Eagerly do we seek to cherish the hope that like Christians, as well as soldiers, they were not unprepared to die;—that when they went out at the call of duty to "lay down their lives for their friends," they had learned their lesson of self-sacrifice from the Saviour's cross. When their bodies were brought in it was found of course that their pockets had been rifled of everything that was of value to the rebels. It was affecting to find, however, on the person of one, the son of Presbyterian parents, a paper, all stained with his blood, on which he had written out a few weeks before the rising, a solemn vow to give up evil and for the sake of his Saviour and his parents to lead a better life. I found also that he had been endeavouring to induce the young men in the town to attend our weekly prayer-meeting. Another, the son of members of our congregation, was a most quiet, exemplary man. His mother has told me that he took a deep interest in his younger brothers, and would not allow them to retire to sleep until they had offered their nightly prayers. Dear Napier and Elliot (the latter an Episcopalian though he often worshipped with us) sat with me at the same table for a year, before my family arrived. It causes a deep pang to think that we are never more to see their forms and faces, or meet their kindly smile on our streets and in our homes. Two more amiable and honourable gentlemen it has seldom been my privilege to meet. Mr. Napier, a tall and stalwart Scotchman, yet gentle and simple as a child, was a son of that gallant family of which his nation is so proud, and had arranged to leave Prince Albert the very week of the outbreak, but he could not go till it was put down. He was "the big man" by whose hands the rebels said two of their number fell. When shot, he said as he fell: "Tell my father and mother I died like a man." Mr. Elliot was the agent for our Foreign Missionary property here, the most promising lawyer in the town. A bright career was cut off short, and many hopes of usefulness and honour were buried along with the deep sorrow of many friends in his untimely grave. Many here, to whom they were neither kith nor kin, have adopted, as it were, these, our dead heroes, into our own families, and cherish their memory with sorrowful and affectionate pride.

I had intended to write to you of other subjects, especially of Riel himself, and the causes that led to the outbreak, but I feel I have already exceeded far the limits which your paper can afford. The journal kept by Riel during the rebellion fell into my hands. It does not contain a narrative of events; but is mainly a record of his fancied visions and his prayers. It is a strange mixture of delusion, fanaticism and earnest devotion. Though one cannot help suspecting that there was a touch of insanity about him, he manifested in his management of the Half-breeds an amount of intelligence, astuteness and ability that prove incontestably that he must be held responsible for his enormous crime.

About the Half-breeds I will only say that, when not misled by agitators and irritated by oppression, they are a most-peaceable and inoffensive people. Those of them who urged the others into rebellion deserve, undoubtedly, severe punishment; but about the greater number—simple, ignorant, easily-beguiled, you can only say with David: "These sheep, what have they done?" Had they got the lands to which they were justly entitled, and for which they have been vainly petitioning for years—had even the commission now sitting been appointed six short months ago to investigate and settle their claims—no such rebellion would ever have occurred, and we would not now be mourning the loss of so much treasure and so many precious lives. This is the opinion of every intelligent person with whom I have conversed on the subject in this neighbourhood.

Of other matters I cannot ask space to write. Mr. Sinclair and myself have resumed work in the High School, which was interrupted by the occupation of the town. Each of us teaches one-half of the day for five days in the week. We have nine pupils and expect more after the holidays. Classes have been opened in

Latin, French, Mathematics and the ordinary English branches. Having beside the school work two Sabbath services and a week-night address to the same congregation, I have not much leisure time at my disposal. I find, too, the people in the North-West quite as critical and cultured, as fond of getting the best their minister can give to them and as able to appreciate it, perhaps like the Irish Presbyterian, as anxious to have "some praching and to get it chape as any of their friends in the East."

A WOMAN'S FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

So my desire has been gratified at last. I have attended a meeting of the General Assembly as a spectator, of course, as "women must keep silence in the Church." Perhaps it would not do that venerable body any harm to know what impressions are made on the mind of an unsophisticated woman, who looks in on them for the first time.

I observed that the Moderator seemed to discharge the duties of his office with much comfort to himself and to the satisfaction of all concerned. I had expected to see him rise to his feet when a motion was to be put to the house, but he showed his good sense in rising but seldom as most of the motions and amendments made were too trivial to make it worth while wasting much reverential dignity upon them. I did think, however, that it was worth even a Moderator's while to rise to receive a delegate from another Church, or to welcome to the platform a missionary just designated to a foreign field. But what does a woman know about the etiquette of church courts?

I observed that no quality in a speaker in the Assembly told better than a stentorian voice. The acoustic properties of Crescent Street Church, Montreal, are not the best. More than half the members who rose to their feet could not be heard by more than one half of those present, and to a great extent the "dear brethren" wasted their wisdom as well as their sweetness on the desert air. When one rose to speak who could make himself easily heard, he was eagerly listened to if his utterances were even moderately sensible and to the point. Good lungs were at a premium in the Assembly, though sometimes I thought it was "hearing indeed a voice and seeing no man."

Some members were fond of "rising to points of order" whatever that means. I observed that such persons seldom or ever rose to anything broader than a "point." No doubt points have their place, though larger souls prefer expending their energies on principles.

Judging from some recent newspaper correspondence one would imagine that the average elder was a very harmless creature in the Assembly, and as docile and innocuous as an elephant in a menagerie. I cannot say that I was so impressed, however. Three or four of them did venture to make their voices heard. But in striking committees, perpetually hearing such names as McLennan, McDonald, Morris; or Charlton, Morris, McDonald; or McLennan, Morris, Fraser, grew rather monotonous after the first day or two. The same monotony was noticeable regarding the names of ministers on committees, though to a less degree. On reading the list of even standing committees certain names appear on as many as four different committees, while the names of other ministers who are no doubt equally efficient and deserving of notice, do not appear on one. But if the many scores of elders and ministers who were there chose to submit meekly and humbly to all this why should a spectator complain?

The most spirited and breezy evening was that devoted to Temperance. Excitement was at fever heat when Dr. MacVicar turned his Gatling gun on those who stood in the way of progress. If it will be any consolation to the wounded spirits of those who had to endure the galling fire of the telling implement on that memorable night, I can assure them that their names are mentioned with affectionate fondness by the supporters of the liquor traffic and that their utterances are likely to be quoted by the opponents for Temperance Reform with profound respect for many a day.

On the whole it is enjoyable to attend a meeting of the General Assembly for the first time. While one sees and hears many things to amuse and some to be deplored, there are also not a few things to evoke admiration and gratitude. No other body of men assembling in our Dominion can compare in intellectual and moral force with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. MARY.

THE TRUE VINE.

The vine typifies the march of Christ as a mighty conqueror, stained with the blood of His enemies. Thus we read: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? That speak in righteousness, mighty to save." Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat? I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with Me; for I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment." The punishment of the wicked is thus described: "The angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and cast it into the great wine press of the wrath of God. And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press even unto the horse-bridles."

The vine is suggestive of shadow and repose. What a grateful abour, with its canopy of green tendrils and spreading leaves, is to a tired traveller, that is Christ to a fainting soul. In Him we find more lasting comfort than Jonah had under his booth, and higher prosperity than Judah and Israel enjoyed in the days of Solomon, when they "dwelt safely every man under his vine and under his fig-tree." Their security was physical, ours is spiritual, their rest was that of the body; ours is that of the soul. In the Song of Solomon the Church is represented as saying of Christ: "I sat down under His shadow with great delight."

The vine speaks to us of rich fruitage. We think of the Eshcol cluster. It tells us of the character of that country. The testimony was: "It is a land that floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it." So favourably affected was Caleb, that he said: "Let us go up and possess it." The cluster that was a burden for two is a token of the excellency, richness and fulness of Christ, in Himself, and of the blessedness of the inheritance that He bestows upon His people.

The vine suggests the humility of Christ. He does not call Himself the oak or cedar, to which the great of earth are likened. He says: "I am the vine." It is not now that which is stately and sturdily that shall best describe Him, it is the clinging, dependent, tender vine. *From the Similitudes of Christ, by Lewis H. Reid.*

THE CONSCIENCE.

It is a curious circumstance that the conscience is not spoken of by Plato, or Aristotle, or any of the Greek philosophers of their age. It seems to have come into use between their time and that of the apostle, and served a very important purpose in setting forth one of the most remarkable powers of our nature.

The best account of it we have anywhere, in ancient or modern writings, is in Romans ii. 15. "Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts, the meanwhile, accusing or else excusing one another."

The office of the conscience is there said to be witnessing, giving joint testimony for good and against evil. It is not what it has often been regarded, the law, it points to a law which is above it, and to which it should be subordinate as the sun in heaven should rule the clock on earth. That law is written on the heart, the conscience testifying to it. But there are thoughts, or reasonings, swaying it, and making it accuse or excuse, it may be erroneously.

This conscience abideth even when misled by the "thoughts," and was working on Paul even when he "thought" that he "ought to do many things contrary to Jesus" (Acts xx. 9), and was persecuting the Christians. He speaks of men having their "conscience seared as with a hot iron" (1 Tim. iv. 2). Only the keenest analysis of the mind could have given us such an account of conscience. *Dr McCosh.*

THE CLOSE OF SERVICE.

Said Dr. Hall recently: I could sometimes wish that you would not leave your pews so abruptly and promptly as you do the moment the last syllable of the benediction has been pronounced. There is no need that you should have your hat in your hand, no need that you should have the great coat upon your shoulder, nor yet the moment the last syllable is pronounced, doors should be thrown open, as though you were eager and impatient until the thing had come to a close. It would be well—it would be better, more in harmony with those outward expressions of reverence—if there were a moment's silence, a silent pause, indicating that when service is closed, you have not been eager for its close, and then it is yours to go away in the hopeful confidence that God, who has been reverently waited upon by you, and whose benediction has been pronounced over you in His name and by His authority, would go with you and help you to make the rest of your life, not secular as distinguished from religious, but spiritual and godly through and through.