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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

France has paid off another large instalment of the War Indemnity, and as a consequence is getting free from the German army of occupation. The one drama of all in that country of restless spirits is to have revenge for Sedan. They may get more than they expect if they try again.

The coming meeting of the Evangelical Alliance, to be held in New York towards the end of next month, is clearly causing some stir in religious circles. Many distinguished visitors from the Old World are expected on that occasion, and every one reckons on what our neighbors call a "good time."

The Gladstone Ministry is gradually losing its power in England, and it would not be at all surprising for the Conservatives to be reinstated in power, at least for a short time, under their old leader—really backed for the first time by a working majority in the House of Commons. Whoever may happen to be the Prime Minister of England now-a-days, a reactionary policy is impossible. Will they or will they not, they must all go forward.

The "Gordon" matter still affords material for very spread-eagle articles to Minnesota Editors. All sensible people on both sides take the matter with an amount of coolness which must be provoking to the Editorial mind in the latitude of St. Paul's. Why should they not? There is no material for a quarrel in the whole question, let the most wrong-headed juvenile struggle as he may to rouse, as the phrase goes, "the national heart." The people on both sides have too much good sense and Christian feeling to quarrel over a matter so evidently to be settled and settled satisfactorily only in a court of law.

Every report from the different sections of our country gives more and more positive statements in reference to the abundance of the Canadian harvest. There is, in short, every prospect of bread enough and to spare within all our borders. Fears have been disappointed. The most sanguine hopes are in the fair way of being more than realized. Canadians have special reason for thankfulness at such a result of the agricultural labors of the year, for a deficient harvest this year would in all likelihood have been but another name for a commercial crisis, and a very large amount of suffering and loss.

The Pacific "Scandal" has entered a new phase. Parliament has been prorogued in circumstances new and unprecedented in the history of Canada, and a Royal Commission has been issued to three Judges, Messrs. Day, Gowan, and Polette, to take evidence on the subject and to report to His Excellency and to the Speakers of the Senate and Commons, so that an early Session of Parliament may be held immediately afterwards to consider the whole matter. It is exceedingly likely that the accusers of the Ministry will not go before this Commission, but will wait till Parliament meets to press their charge.

The civil war still rages in unhappy Spain. The Carlists reckon up some successes, but they make no such headway as they would have done had the general feeling in favor of the old dynasty been to any extent so powerful as has been represented. The debasing influences of ages of civil and religious despotism cannot be got quit of in a day. That the final issue of the struggle will be some more or less modified form of Republicanism there can be little doubt. A "blessed restoration" may perhaps be part of the righteous judgment with which Spain is yet to be afflicted, but that that will be permanent under the wretched Bourbons who still, in all their branches, learn nothing and forget nothing, cannot be believed by those who watch the course of ideas and feeling gathering strength on all hands. Everywhere, whether for good or for evil, the people are coming to the front, and individuals favored merely by birth and descent are less and less counted upon. In Spain, as elsewhere, the sins of the fathers come upon the children in suffering and confusion, but Don Carlos is not going to be the heaven-sent deliverer.

A CENTRAL BUILDING FUND.

There is nothing more evidently needed for the vigorous and effective carrying on of the various departments of church work, than a central building fund—a thing which, we rather suspect, is not possessed by a single Presbyterian body in Canada. We shall not be too sure about the churches in the Lower Provinces, but as far as the two in Ontario and Quebec are concerned, we are perfectly certain. The result of this

has been that the progress of the cause in many localities has been far less rapid and satisfactory than it would otherwise have been; and that the hearts of not a few have been discouraged in their efforts at extending and consolidating the church in the newer districts of our land.

The plan of sending deputations to beg for funds is essentially an unround and disagreeable one. Nothing can well be more trying than that of the unfortunate deputy who has to go from door to door stating his case, and claiming the assistance of the wealthier brethren. It is a trial which few but the most courageous of men will face more than once in the course of a life time. The apologetic, half pauper feeling that is apt to come over one is any thing but pleasant, while the treatment received is not seldom such as to call for the liveliest exercise of long suffering meekness. On the other hand, the plan is found in practical operation to be so unequal, vexatious, and sometimes so provoking for those who are operated on, that they are almost ready to feel as if they did well to be angry. Generally the same parties in each locality are always called upon, and to refuse and to comply in not a few cases may be equally perplexing and unsatisfactory. There is no time or opportunity to examine into the relative importance and efficacy of different appeals. There are no means of ascertaining what may be the ability of the people seeking help, what may have been the extent to which they have helped themselves, and how much they may still be prepared to do, if a certain amount of assistance were secured. A giver is very much in such cases acting in the dark, with nothing to guide him except naturally very partial and very favorable representations. The whole is spasmodic, disagreeable, and in not a few cases actually injurious. If the canvasser happen to have personal friends in a place he may manage to interest them in his cause, and from their representations and influence he may secure a very handsome sum; while another not so blessed with acquaintances may be sent empty away though his case may be a far stronger one, and the general welfare of the body far more involved in his getting liberal and speedy assistance.

So much has this been felt that again and again a central building fund has been talked about, but it has gone no further than talk. Such a fund in our estimation is quite as necessary as any of the schemes of the Church for which regular contributions are solicited. In many parts of Canada the erection of the first cheap church is the great difficulty, and the delay in accomplishing this has been fatal to many a promising Presbyterian cause. If there had been a regular building fund much trouble would have been saved, and also much additional liberality would have been called forth. Presbyterian oneness would have been more manifestly and practically exhibited, and kind words, kind inquiries and a little reasonable and kind assistance would have given many a young cause a start which would have carried it successfully through. In the great Presbyterian Church of the United States such a fund has been found to work admirably, while with the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland, the fund for liquidating debt and for church extension has been in many cases as life from the dead. The help given has been often large and important, but the sympathy exhibited has been far more effective. It has brought giver and receiver more directly into contact as engaged in our work, and made many accomplish with ease what, if left to themselves, they could never have thought of attempting. All over the newer districts in Canada the need of such a fund is greatly felt. The very success of the missionaries and students make that need the more evident. It is not well to send our missionaries on collecting tours, and a mere general appeal to the liberality of friends through magazines or newspapers in favour of any particular station will seldom amount to much. We rather suspect that Home Mission Funds could not be legitimately taken for building purposes. And what refuge is left but that for which we plead? Cases in Muskoka, cases down in the Lake Superior region; cases down on the Ottawa, &c., are all more or less pressing, all deserving help, all demanding it, with the risk of great and permanent injury if it is long withheld; while to meet all these we have nothing systematic, no scheme by which local effort may be stimulated to the utmost, and at the same time reasonable and effective help secured. We hope the leading liberal and wealthy friends of Presbyterianism will look to this, and give and arrange as the importance of the matter demands. Many would be only too happy to give if they had the opportunity, who would not put down their names on a subscription book for a cause of which they know nothing, while wise and active business men in different localities might do an amount of good in the practical working out of the scheme which would be absolutely incalculable. We have an increasing number of zealous and devoted students, preachers and ministers, whose hands ought to be strengthened and their

hearts encouraged, by being made to feel that in their labors they can reckon on the sympathy and assistance of the whole body. There is no occasion to wait for such a fund being formally organized. If sums were specially set in to Mr. Reid, to be administered till next Assembly by the Home Mission Committee, the scheme would speedily take shape, and the whole Church would soon feel its quickening and strengthening power. Which of our wealthy men will be the first to start a scheme which would from the first be recognized as one of the most popular and effective organizations for the advancement of the Presbyterian Church in Canada?

WALDENSES.

The interest felt in the history and present condition of the Waldenses has been very general. That singular people have come to be much more widely known than many far more numerous, far wealthier, and, to all appearances, far more important communities. In all Protestant countries their fame has been spread abroad as that of a people who "kept the faith when all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones." Their history has been a mournful yet a most glorious one, telling of what more than fiendish cruelty could devise and execute, and what simple faith and quenchless zeal could both dare and endure. But while we in Canada have a general idea of the past record of those who never bowed the knee to Baal and never kissed his image, the idea is vague and unsatisfactory compared with what it ought to be. If we know more of those simple Christians of the Alps, it would be better for them, and it would also be greatly better for ourselves. We rejoice therefore at the visit of the Rev. Matteo Prochet to this continent, for the purpose of diffusing information on the subject and securing subscriptions for carrying on and extending the work which God very evidently is putting to the hands of these children of the valleys. Mr. Prochet gave an address last Lord's day evening in Gould-street Church, Toronto, and we are sure we speak the conviction of every one present, when we say it was good to be there.

The written documents of the Waldenses are generally understood to extend as far back as A.D. 1100, though some modern experts in these matters affect to question this. "With the dawn of history," writes James MacIntosh, "we discover some simple Christians in the valleys of the Alps, where they still exist under the ancient name of Vaudois, who, by the light of the New Testament, saw the extraordinary contrast between the purity of primitive times and the vices of the gorgeous and imperial hierarchy which surrounded them."

This Church has been the object of the special and bitter hostility of Rome, and no bloodier chapter in the bloody history of that mother of harlots can be found, than that which tells of the exterminating raids upon the humble dwellers in these secluded Alpine valleys. Thirty-six distinct persecutions are recorded, every one of which had in view either their utter extermination or their absolute subjugation to the Pope. The instruments employed by Rome in this fiendish work were the Dukes of Savoy, the ancestors of the present King of Italy. It is not for a newspaper article to record the various St. Bartholomews enacted against these poor people—indeed, it is hard to believe that man's inhumanity to man could ever go so far as it was undoubtedly carried in 1655 by the armed and sacred soldiers of the Holy Father. "Children," says Leger, an eye-witness, "torn for their mother's breasts, were seized by the feet and dashed against the rocks or walls, which were covered with their brains while their tender bodies were cast on the common heaps; or one soldier, seizing one limb of these innocent creatures, and another taking hold of the other, would tear them asunder, beat their mothers with them, and at last throw them into the fields. The sick and aged, both men and women, were either burned in their houses, or literally cut in pieces; or, stripped of their garments, were tied up like a ball, with their heads between their legs, and rolled over rocks."

Then was the time when Oliver Cromwell, by a long way the greatest sovereign that ever England knew, interfered in his own effective manner, and Milton gave utterance to the indignation and horror of the age in the imperishable lines beginning—

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold; 'E'en them who kept thy faith so pure of old, When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones."

Words these which tell not only of indignation, but which breathe a prayer most strikingly being answered in these latter days. Had Cromwell lived, he would have been the effective protector of these simple saints. But the great chieftain died, and then succeeded a time which no Englishman, to whom England's honor is dear, can ever think of but with a blush and sigh; a

time when the land was dissolved in fatal license, and the heartless and contemptible Charles the Second only passed away to be succeeded by one, if possible, still more heartless and contemptible. No more hope, apparently, was there for the Vaudois. Past horrors were even improved on in the terrible times that succeeded, till they culminated in the dreadful doings of 1686-9. Yet these people were not destroyed. Napoleon the First for a short time gave them freedom, and then, in 1815, by the "blessed" restoration of kings, they sank back again in bondage. All the old penal laws were revived. Rome was once more in the ascendant, and forgot not its old feud. But better times at length came round. The great earthquake year of 1818 brought at last liberty to the valleys, and the overturnings of 1859-61 opened all Italy, with its twenty-two millions of people, to the evangelistic efforts of this Church in the wilderness, which, though on fire so often, has remained to this day unconsumed.

We are not aware what may be Mr. Prochet's subsequent movements or the length of the stay he makes in Canada, but sure we are that the more the past history and present condition of the Church he represents are known, just so much the more may he reckon on the active sympathy and assistance of all who love the good cause for whose sake generation after generation of those noble Vaudois were willing to suffer the loss of all things, and brave indignation and cruelties infinitely worse than death. The Rev. Mr. King, Toronto, will take charge of any sums sent him for the Waldenses.

LAKE SUPERIOR AND PLEASURE TRIPS.

The newspapers of the States, especially those that may be called "religious," teem at present with letters giving descriptions, more or less graphic, of sights and scenes met with in the course of summer travel. Among the rest, an American D.D. gives his experiences of Lake Superior, and his ideas of its attractiveness as a place for summer holiday-making. Gradually the people of Ontario are beginning to appreciate the splendid opportunities for recreation which lie conveniently to their hand, without their having to travel far or be at much expense, and our neighbors are, if possible, before us in the discovery. At least, if Dr. Rockwell is to be taken as a specimen, the North shore of Lake Superior will have an ever-increasing number of summer visitors. In a general way the Doctor gives his opinion of the district in the following terms:—

"For the tourist and the man in search of healthful recreation, there is not a more delightful trip than that to Lake Superior by the Georgian Bay."

We have only room for the following extract, which may lead some of our readers to go and see for themselves. The Doctor spent two or three weeks at Prince Arthur's Landing, greatly to the advantage of his health, and his personal enjoyment as well. The fact is, we in Ontario have no need to run away down to Murray Bay, Cacouna, and so forth, were it not that it has come to be thought the right thing to take the lengthened journey and incur the great expense thereby involved:—

"The passage," says Dr. Rockwell, "by the islands of the North Shore, is through many narrow and intricate channels, and brings us through scenery of marvellous wildness and beauty. Entering the St. Mary's River, we pause for a while at Garden River, where is an extensive Indian Mission, and reach the Sault Ste. Marie just as the bells of the chapel are tolling for evening service. We enter the canal which leads around the Falls, after nine o'clock, and yet the twilight is so strong as to enable us to read the time from our watches."

"The Sault is a beautiful rapid of about a mile in length, around which the Indian still encamps, and in which he may be seen in the morning in his light canoe in search of white fish, of which the very best are taken just here."

"After entering the broad waters of Lake Superior, the English steamers make a northwesterly course for Batchewagan, where a mail is to be left, then for Michipicoten Harbor, where is a station of the Hudson's Bay Company. But the great point of interest here is the island bearing the same name, and lying twenty miles distant, which is a perfect marvel of beauty, with its land-locked harbor, and its little fairy islets, some of which look like flower gardens burned to stone."

"But the grandest scenery perhaps on the whole Lake, is found at Nipigon Bay, where we reach the forty-ninth degree of latitude. Entering it by its westernmost channel, we are for more than sixty miles passing through a series of islands of the wildest and most rugged character. Immense walls of rock, basaltic palisades, weird and strange figures among the headlands, hills crowned with primeval forests, and a sense of awful and eternal solitude, serve to make the whole scene one of surpassing interest and beauty."

We regret that in the communication on Mission Work in Muskoka there were several typographical errors. For "town," the last word in the first paragraph, read Zion. In the second paragraph, "house for the mission," it should be minister. In the fourth paragraph for five sites, read five.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES.

The Church formed by the Union of the Old and New School is the largest Presbyterian organization in the world. Under date of the 4th of August of this year the following official statistics were published, which speak for themselves:—

Table with 2 columns: Category and Amount. Includes Synods, Presbyteries, Candidates, Licentiate, Ministers, etc. Total: 89,622.00

Ministers and Churches.

The induction of the Rev. Gustavus Munro to the charge of Knox Church, Embro, took place on Tuesday last, after which a festival was held on the grounds adjoining the church. Forty years have elapsed since similar festivities took place in Embro.—

The Rev. George Bell, L.L.D., having resigned his charge in Clifton, owing to ill health, was waited upon on Wednesday, the 23rd ult., by a committee, and presented with a purse of \$287. Much regret is felt by the inhabitants of Clifton in losing one who has been so highly useful and respected by all parties.

A couple of weeks ago the C. P. congregation at Wellington Square presented their late pastor, the Rev. A. Milne, with a purse containing \$85. The presentation was made by the Rev. R. N. Grant, Mr. Milne's predecessor, in a very happy speech. Mr. Milne expressed his surprise at receiving such a handsome gift, after the numerous tokens of their good will manifested on previous occasions.

One by one, says the Berlin "Telegraph," our holiday-seeking citizens are returning home again. The Rev. Mr. Dickie, who formed one of a camping-out party at the headwaters of Lake Joseph and other lakes in the Muskoka District, appeared in his pulpit on Sunday last, looking over so much better of his three weeks' "roughing it." Mr. J. King, Barrister, who was with the same party, and was in poor health before he tried tent life and yacht cruising among the islands of these beautiful lakes, returned on Tuesday last considerably improved in health and strength. Both gentlemen, who are brown as bricks, speak in glowing terms of the enjoyableness of their trip, barring the mosquitoes and black flies, which, owing to the wetness of the season, were pretty troublesome. But the fishing and shooting, we are told, were excellent and the breezes of the lakes, even during our hottest days here, uncommonly fresh and bracing.

INDUCTION AT ST. LOUIS DE GONZAQUE AND VALLEYFIELD.

The united congregation of St. Louis de Gonzague and Valleyfield, in connection with the Canada Presbyterian Church, vacant since the translation of the Rev. W. Coulthard, has obtained a settled pastor. In the month of July last a unanimous call was addressed to the Rev. A. Young, and having been accepted by that gentleman, his induction took place on Thursday, the 14th inst. The Rev. J. Watson, of Huntington, presided on the occasion, and preached a suitable discourse at St. Louis from 1 Tim. iii. 1. The Rev. C. M. McKeenchar, of English River, gave the usual charge to the minister, and the Rev. J. M. Gibson, of Montreal, addressed the people. In the evening of the same day, a similar service was held at Valleyfield, the other section of the congregation. The Rev. R. M. Thornton, of Knox Church, Montreal, preached on the occasion from 2 Thess. iii. 1, and the other parts of the service were conducted by the Rev. Messrs. Watson and Gibson. At both places the attendance was good. The services were of an interesting and impressive nature, and at the close the newly inducted minister received a cordial welcome from the people. The settlement is harmonious, and we earnestly trust the Divine blessing may abundantly rest on both minister and people. Mr. Young's address is Valleyfield P. O., Province of Quebec.—Con.