CASUAL COMMENTS.

TORONTO was visited on Sunday last by a famous Scottish preacher, Rev John McNeill, called by some the Spurgeon of Scotland According to those who heard him, he preached two "grand sermons" in the Mutual Street Rink, but, as I was not among the audience, I have to accept the newspaper reports as being, what I have no doubt they are, a fair synopsis of what the speaker said Taking them as the basis of my opinion, I must say I cannot agree with those who so raptorously describe Mr McNeill's discourses. He may have been eloquent and impressive—certainly those who heard him thought he was—but what did he say that amounted to anything when it was put into cold type? Judging from what appeared in this form in Monday's papers, not very much He took as his subjects the prayer of the Pharisee and the return of the prodigal, but can anyone who heard him speak tell clearly who he meant by Pharisees and Prodigals? Did he describe them with sufficient distinctness to enable John Smith to be certain that he was a first-class Pharisee, and to know just what made him so? If they can, its more than the printed account enables me to do. Although he prided himself upon his directness, Mr. McNeill's sermons appear to have been, like the majority of those we hear in Toronto, brilliant denunciations, in general terms, of the sins which the orthodox preacher considers it his duty to inveigh against, but there is great reason to question whether there will be one Pharisee or one Prodigal less on account of their delivery.

IT is all very well to denounce Phariseeism and to point out the heinousness of lying, stealing and licentiousness, but unless it is also made *clear just* what constitutes Phariseeism—unless men are shown that there are other kinds of lying and stealing besides what society considers as such, and that the cause of the prevalence of immorality must be removed *before* it will cease to exist—very little practical good can result from preaching. Men do not *steal* (as it is ordinarily accepted) on account of fear of the law, and because it is not respectable, and this applies *to all sins which are under the ban of respectability*. But what about the wrongs which society and the Church condone? *Are* they to go unpreached about because it has so far been customary to leave them alone? Mr. McNeill had a grand chance to stir things to their foundations in this goody-good town of ours—no salary was at stake in his case, no deputation *of the prominent men* of the Church could wait upon him to remonstrate with him, and yet he was apparently content with an exhibition of a lot of glittering generalities, which would be taking with all classes, and so kept on the *safe* ground which the Church has approved of for so many generations.

IN sharp distinction to this regulation generalising was the sermon preached by Rev. J. E. Henderson in Carlton Street Methodist church on the same Sunday evening. *Here was no adherence* to cut and dried notions, no denunciations of what all know to be sins, and very few practice in the form spoken of, but a clear, outspoken declaration of the injustice which is the sin of humanity to-day He told his hearers that all men were brothers, and that anything less than brotherliness is a crime, and displeasing to God. He spoke of the high-handed despots who rule this world, and tyrannize over *their* weaker brethren, declaring that they would, and should, be swept away, and then a day would dawn, in which all would, in *fact*, be brethren, and inequality would not exist. Not much indefiniteness about this for we know what treating our fellow men as brothers means, and that makes the path of duty *clear enough for* all to follow it Mr Henderson also declared his belief in a true socialism, which would recognize the claims of all God's children to a share in His bounties, said that Jesus of Nazareth preached this same *socialism 1,900 years* ago, and that, whether his congregation agreed with him or not, he believed this and was going to preach it. These are brave words, and Mr Henderson is a brave man to have uttered them in a church like Carlton Street Methodist. It is hardly likely that they will be popular with some of the members, but the truth never has been among the *upper classes*, and one of the surest indications that Christianity has been, and is *still*, obscured by errors is its present popularity with the wealthy However hard the position may be that this outspoken gentleman gets into as the result of his honest expression of his convictions, all who feel as he does will applaud his action, and even those who do not agree with him cannot but admire his manliness.

ANOTHER manly man, who also preached the same Sunday evening, is Rev. J C Hodgins, pastor of the Hamilton Unitarian church He occupied the pulpit of the First Unitarian church here, and spoke upon the gradual emancipation of man from the slavery of fear and dependence in which he had so long lived. Mr Hodgins graphically described the various stages through which the race had passed, showing how, from servile fear of a terrible God, and a superstitious belief in the Bible as a fetish of some kind, men had risen to believe that man is *the arbiter of his own destiny*, and as he lives so *is* he; that acts, not belief, make character; and that the grandest man is he who feels that on himself, and himself alone, depends whether that character is noble or ignoble, *true or false*. *It* was more than pleasure to listen to him, and no one who heard him could help feeling that this was the gospel calculated to make *true* men and women of all mankind If a man really believes, that on himself and no other, depends his future, and that as he lives, so will his fellow-men be better or worse for his living, he cannot help being inspired to efforts to make for himself a noble and God like character Mr. Hodgins has the faculty of making those who hear him feel that he is one of themselves, not talking *from* a height, and the moment of intense stillness which succeeded the completion of his discourse was a tribute to his power to lead men to efforts which, if persisted in, will result in grander, truer lives.

THESE three preachers, speaking on the same Sunday, impressed me strongly as being types of three classes of people The first, who had *the largest audience* and has the *largest following, representing* those who are satisfied that there is ultimate truth, and they have got it, the second, whose audience and following was and is smaller those who feel that *they have the* truth, but it has been obscured and only needs the rubbish to be cleared away from it to reveal it in all its original beauty; the third, who had a still smaller audience, and whose following corresponds, those who are searching for truth, and care not where they find it All are honest in their belief and the expression of it, but the standpoint from which they work, and the results they hope for, are totally different. I must confess that the latter two attract me most strongly, and that I hope for most from their efforts; but as *for those* who read this, or who heard the speakers, they will judge for themselves, and will be influenced by the one who comes nearest their ideal.

DOWN at Ottawa there exists the necessary material for a first-class row The men who received the munificent wage of $7.50 and $8.00 for six days, of eleven hours, of laborious work, are asking that the money be increased fifty cents, and the time reduced by an hour a day This would strike any man but a mill-owner as a very reasonable request, and no one but said owner can blame the men for using the only means in their power in their endeavor to obtain a nearer approach to justice Of course the strikers gathered together and talked the matter over, and, in consequence, the capitalist lords said that they *were conspiring to do damage* to their property A requisition, signed by three Magistrates, one of them a proprietor, was made for the militia to protect *their* property. Such is the state of affairs at the time I write. Whether the just anger against their grinding employers will be fanned into a flame of desire for revengeful destruction, by the action of the *authorities* cannot be foretold, but, if it is, the men will be blamed, and perhaps shot down like dogs by their fellows, while the oppressors will "deserve the thanks of the community for their prompt action, as it doubtless prevented great destruction of property" So things go, and we wonder why men and women are not better, forgetting that it is just things like this which turn men into drunken, despondent do-nothings, and cause women to turn aside from the path of virtue, or endure untold misery

THERE has been a terrible fuss raised by some of the censors of our morals over the attractions at the Fair, but they are, as frequently is the case, very inconsistent. The fact that a woman wears skirts a little shorter than usual is a *horrible offence*, but *the risk of life accompanying* the balloon ascension, and the shortening of it by the tumbling and contortions which are another feature of the show, go unnoticed I'm not trying to justify the short skirts to me there's nothing either very terrible or attractive about them but I can't understand a morality which makes less of a risk of life than the exhibition of a little more striped stocking than is absolutely necessary.

REGARDING the show itself, I'm only inflicting part of an overdose upon you if I say anything, but I don't think many will say much on one point, so, perhaps, you'll pardon me if I write a few words While the Fair is, and has been, an undoubted success, yet it shares in the general affliction of this age of the world. It must *pay*, and so every nerve is strained to *make* the most money possible If it didn't come out even, in fact, something ahead, 'twould be regarded by Toronto as something approaching a national calamity, and upon its managers would fall the verdict of incompetency This is, I suppose, nothing to be surprised at, for, as I have said before, *we are taught*, "*from* the cradle to the grave," that making money means success, the opposite, failure; but the effect is there just the same. We are *in danger of turning* what was originally intended as an instructive institution into a mere gathering of mountebanks and hawkers, and solely because it's got to pay This money gathering is the curse of the community, but as long as *it is* held up as "the blessing of the Lord," so long it will continue to overshadow all that is best and noblest in the community.

BEN.

THE passing of the American Copyright Act is said to have already cost one of the largest printing houses in Edinburgh over $15,000.

REV. ANNA SHAW thinks that the chief cause of domestic unhappiness is the financial servitude which most women endure; and she believes that the mental, political and industrial emancipation of women will increase the number of happy marriages

A GOOD filter is the following:—"Take a large garden flower pot with a piece of sponge in the hole at the bottom, placed on two pieces of wood over a clean pail; *first* put in it a layer of charcoal powdered, and then a layer of clean sand, each about two inches thick Pour the water in at the top and let it drain through"

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SALE OF PINE TIMBER

A QUANTITY of standing pine timber upon unsold and unlicensed lands of the Crown, west of Sudbury, in the neighborhood of the Canadian Pacific Railway, estimated as follows:

Spanish River	13,500,000 feet B M
Onaping Lake, north of	[illegible]
Onaping Lake, south of	11,000,000 "
Cat Lake, Ramsay Station	[illegible]
Township of Moncrief	5,000,000 "
Township of Hess	[illegible]
Total	[illegible] feet B M

Having been damaged by fire during the past summer the undersigned hereby calls for tenders for the right to cut the damaged timber There is also some green pine, estimated at 1,000,000 feet, in the vicinity north of Onaping Lake for which tenders are also invited. Tenders will be received up to and including the 15th day of October next, and may be for any parcel or for the whole, and must state the amount per thousand feet board measure the tenderer is willing to pay for the burnt and green timber separately, in addition to the regular Crown dues of one dollar per thousand feet board measure For conditions and further particulars application should be made to the Crown Lands Department.

Mr John Regan, forest ranger under the Department, will be at Cartier Station on and after the 15th September to give information to parties desirous of examining the timber.

The above figures represent only the Department's estimate and intending purchasers must satisfy themselves as to quantities, etc.

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September 1, 1891.

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