

## THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

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EDITORIALS with several communications and reports crowded out.

## CONGREGATIONAL NEWS NOT NECESSARILY OF NO GENERAL INTEREST.

WE are always glad to receive hints from friends and well-wishers as to the best plans for conducting a religious paper, and concerning the surest means for making it generally useful and popular. It is not possible to adopt all of these or to act upon them, for frequently they are so much opposed to each other that the adoption of one necessarily involves the rejection of two or three suggested with equal urgency and recommended with quite as much confidence as likely to issue in the PRESBYTERIAN becoming a "great success."

Some are quite sure that a large infusion of current secular news would be a vast improvement, though they do not seem to bear in mind that our space is limited, that secular papers, both daily and weekly, are abundant, that a meagre abstract of stale intelligence is in these days not very attractive, and that the sandwiching of the secular and sacred in the way suggested might not be so satisfactory as they suppose. We have no idea that the secular and religious in a man's life ought to be separated by a hard and fast line. On the contrary, all the former ought to be interpenetrated and moulded by the latter, so that there may be, and are cases when matters strictly secular have to be discussed in every variety of way by both individuals and journals that claim to be, and are, strictly religious. But as a general thing we are persuaded that the PRESBYTERIAN will serve a better purpose, and will edify a larger number of individuals rather by following, in this respect, the course which it has hitherto pursued, than by striving to give a résumé of the week's news, and by discussing all the current and "burning" questions of local or general politics.

We are entreated by others to spare them the infliction of socials, presentations and congregational statistics, as if these were "barren as the ribbed sea sand," and not in the slightest degree interesting to the great body of our readers. On the other hand we are assured with equal confidence that if more of such items were given more general satisfaction would be secured and expressed. Frankly, we cannot give up the "socials," still less are we inclined to part with the presentations, and least of all, can we believe that congregational statistics are either uninteresting or unprofitable. As Presbyterians we are all one. What concerns and interests one congregation ought to concern and interest all, and we are persuaded that this is increasingly the case. It is quite possible that at some socials things may be said and done which are not for edification. If so, it is a matter for deep regret, for it cannot fail to have an injurious influence upon the spiritual interests of those who so offend. But after all we are persuaded that such instances are exceptional, and will, we trust, be increasingly so. We are not sure, indeed, that tea-meetings are the best or most profitable means for raising money for the Lord's work. Yet surely there is nothing necessarily objectionable in them even in this respect. All depends upon how they are managed. While as to their helpfulness in promoting sociality and kindly feeling among the members of congregations there can be no doubt whatever. The direction is plain that all things should be done to edification, and we see no more difficulty in this edification being so far secured by such social meetings than by the Sabbath services. To turn these meetings into mere occasions for fun, and very poor fun at that, is simply detestable. But there is no need for this being done. Christians, both young and old, can surely enjoy themselves to their

hearts' content without having recourse to either buffoonery or mere fooling, especially in the house of God.

There is, let individuals protest as they please, nothing which gives us more pleasure than to record the expressions of kindly regard and hearty appreciation which congregations or individuals make to their ministers in the shape of presents, on the one understanding, that these are not mere paltry salves to conscience in order to conceal or atone for inadequate or irregularly paid stipends. The stipend, fairly, regularly and fully paid—that is the first thing. But after that, many an earnest, anxious pastor will have his heart lightened and his energies restrung by the spontaneous, kindly, unexpected gift—and its mere money value is of comparatively minor importance—which may indicate genuine "fruit" produced to the glory of His grace, and the modest record of which among brethren ought certainly to do no harm. Rather the reverse, for it lets all be sharers in each other's joy. We cannot manage to give the addresses. If we did we should often have room for nothing else. But we cannot think that there are many of our readers we are sure there ought not to be one who, when useful men are thus honoured and encouraged, are so childish as to refuse to "joy and rejoice with them."

Nor can we, above all, give up the yearly statement of individual congregational work. Instead of that we should like to have more of it, condensed of course to the very last degree possible. True, all such records of churches built and paid for, of ministers made comfortable in decent and convenient manses, of an ever-rising standard of Christian liberality, and of joyous, generous work both in holding fast and holding forth the Word of life, may not necessarily imply a higher tone of religious feeling, a deeper spirituality, or a more living personal interest "in the things connected with life and salvation," for all these efforts, it may be said, may take their rise from lower and meaner motives than these. Yet while this is possible it is not at all so likely. On the contrary the natural conclusion to be drawn from the view of such an increase of energy and effort is that the Spirit of God is working with growing power in these communities and individuals, so that the most becoming and satisfactory attitude in which others can receive such intelligence is to "glorify God in them," and be the more stimulated in humble, prayerful gladness to "go and do likewise." We have no wish to encourage an ostentatious spirit either in ministers or congregations. But sometimes, as everyone knows, the record of steady, earnest zeal and liberality "provokes" (in the right sense of that word) "many," as well as causes "great searchings of hearts" among not a few others. There are none in the Presbyterian Church in Canada who can yet speak of having come up to their ability, far less of having gone beyond it; while, let it never be forgotten, the grand, wondrous "inasmuch as" which shall, some of these days, greet every one of Christ's genuine disciples, will only come as involving something almost like rebuke, and as bringing with it a feeling akin even to mortification in the estimation of those who have most faithfully borne, and wrought, and given, "for His sake" who has for them "done it all."

TORONTO has had a visit from Dr. Talmage, and has been so far enlightened by the Brooklyn divine on the question whether or not "Christianity has been a failure." There was a great crowd, much laughter, a plentiful allowance of commonplace, great denunciation of clerical dulness, a vigorous grappling with the misdeeds of the liver, funny illustrations of professional jealousy, with delicious onslaughts upon brother-clergymen, whose sermons, it seems, "could not be made heavier by a load of bricks," and whose strongest efforts would never cause a "sensation, even the slightest," etc. In short for those who like such a thing, the Dr.'s lecture was just the thing they would like. He tells a story very well, keeps himself becomingly serious, and plays the clerical mountebank with a good deal of success. Of course South's retort is always ready, "What would you have done or said had it pleased Providence to make you witty?" and we frankly acknowledge that there is no saying what might have been the result of such a strange change of affairs. Still we persist in thinking, with all the terrors of a brickbat in the shape of a charge of ineffectual dulness and semi-idiotcy being thrown at our head, that the Talmage exhibition is anything but

edifying. We prefer Mark Twain indefinitely, both on the score of wit and instruction.

THE troubles in South Africa seem always to become more and more formidable. By last accounts the British had been defeated by the Boers, and the communications with the beleaguered host had been cut off. After all, we must bear in mind that these Boers are no such heroes in the cause of liberty as they are sometimes represented to be. They or their fathers went from the Cape Colony because they were indignant at being deprived of their slaves by the general Emancipation Act of 1834. From that day to this they have sought to make slaves of the natives in whose territories they have taken up their abode; have violated again and again the conditions on which Britain recognized their independence; have been the greatest opponents of all mission work among the natives; and have shown a spirit of greedy, grasping, oppressive selfishness, which ill comports with the air of suffering innocence and patriotism which they are fain at times to assume. Into the rights and the wrongs of the late resumption by the British of authority over these Boers and their territory, or rather the territory which they have seized from the natives, we do not at present enter. But it will, we believe, eventually be found to have been a great mistake on the part of Britain to have ever recognized the independence either of the Transvaal or the Orange sovereignty, though possibly after having made the recognition it may be as great a mistake to have recalled it.

THE Chicago "Interior" says: "A valuable little work for Presbyterian ministers and others especially interested in the Church, is the PRESBYTERIAN YEAR BOOK for the Dominion of Canada, edited by Rev. James Cameron, of Chatsworth, Ont. In addition to general statistics of ministers, churches, contributions, etc., of the Churches of Canada and Newfoundland, it contains general statistics of Presbyterianism throughout the world. It also contains a good summary of the facts brought out in the proceedings of the Evangelical Alliance. It is packed full of information. It opens with a calendar with blanks for memoranda." Mailed from this office to any address on receipt of twenty-five cents.

We are requested to say that any tune which will suit the second version of the 136th Psalm will suit the verses of the Rev. A. B. Mackay given in our issue of 7th January.

THE Guelph "Mercury" says: "The PRESBYTERIAN YEAR BOOK for the Dominion of Canada and Newfoundland has been issued by the publisher, C. Blackett Robinson, Toronto. It furnishes a great deal of valuable information concerning the Church it is intended to serve, containing, as it does, besides a complete list of the churches, ministers and colleges, a special feature in the condensed proceedings of the General Council of the Presbyterian Alliance." Mailed free to any address on receipt of twenty-five cents, by the publisher, 5 Jordan street, Toronto.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.—Rev. Dr. Reid has received the undermentioned sums for the Schemes of the Church, viz William Cunningham, Huntingdon, for Foreign Missions, \$5; Member of Chalmers' Church, Elora, for Home Mission, \$150, Foreign Missions, \$50; George Barron, Elora, for French Evangelization, \$5; Friend, Montreal, for Waldensian Pastors' Fund, \$5; Latona, for Waldensian Pastors' Fund, \$5; Friend or Widow's Mite, Aird, for Waldensian Pastors' Fund, \$5; John McPhee, Cornwall, for Waldensian Pastors' Fund, \$5; M. G., for Dr. Mackay's Mission, \$2.

PRESBYTERY OF OWEN SOUND.—This Presbytery met in St. Paul's Church, Sydenham, on the 18th ult., at half-past one p.m., and in Knox Church, St. Vincent, the same day at seven p.m. The minutes of the last meeting were read and sustained. The Rev. A. T. Colter was appointed Moderator for next six months. A Presbyterial visitation was held in each congregation. The affairs of both congregations were found to be in a satisfactory condition, and the interest felt by the congregations in their affairs was manifested by the large attendance at the meetings. Messrs. Rodger, McLennan, Cameron and Somerville were appointed a committee to draw up a deliverance on the result of the visitation, said deliverance to be