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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1885.

AMONG the contributions this week readers will find interesting papers from our correspondent in Halifax, N. S., in the extreme east, and from another in New Westminster, B. C., in the extreme West of the Dominion. Next week we shall give another of T. H.'s admirable letters from the European continent, and a thoughtful paper on "Christian Unity," by Professor Charles Elliott, D.D., late of the Theological Seminary of the North-West, and translator of the Minor Prophets for the English edition of Lange's Commentary, and a letter from our own correspondent in Montreal

A CORRESPONDENT writes to the *Interior* stating that at a congregational meeting held for business purposes the pastor in the chair, an elder tendered his resignation. The pastor remonstrated with him on the ground—at least so says the correspondent—that the office was for life and declined to put the question to the meeting. The resignation was withdrawn. The correspondent wishes to know if the elder had a right to resign. The *Interior* answers thus:

The elder had the right to offer his resignation, and to insist upon its reception. His office being for life no more requires him to serve in the same congregation, than the ministerial office, being for life, requires a minister to preach all his life to the same congregation. A minister may remain in a congregation and yet have no official relations to it. So may an elder.

Unless the constitution and practice of the Presbyterian Church across the lines are different from those of the majority of Presbyterian Churches, the elder had no right to resign *there*. He should have tendered his resignation to the session of which he was a member. Is the practice different with our neighbours or is the general and wide-awake *Interior* napping? Even Homer used to nod occasionally.

AMUSEMENTS of various kinds abound at this season of the year. Many good people are tempted to say, in their haste, not that "all men are liars," as David said, but that all men have become foolish. The pastor reads that a hundred couples attended some ball, that the skating rink was crowded, or even other kinds of amusement well patronized; he knows that there were not fifty people at the prayer meeting, and he feels bad. Probably he is injudicious enough to scold the good souls who came to pray because their number is not larger, just as if those devout people who came to pray should be punished for the sins of those who remained away. But there is a huge fallacy underlying most of the comparisons made by ministers between religious meetings and gatherings at places of amusement. The ball complained about is held but once a year, perhaps only once in several years, and could not be repeated every week, if the weekly repetition were to save the lives of those present. Toronto is rarely able to support two theatres—Toronto supports perhaps a hundred churches. None of our smaller cities and towns can afford to keep a theatre—they all support many churches. The comparison between a vigorous well-attended church and any place of amusement, if fairly made, is altogether in favour of the church, whether you consider the attendance or the money paid, not to speak of the character and standing of the people at both places. And yet how often are the facts made to convey quite the opposite impression. Brethren, be careful how you belittle your own cause and Christ's.

UNDOUBTEDLY one of the causes that led to the break down of the old scheme for supplying vacancies was the small sum paid to probationers. The mini-

mum was we believe \$8 per Sabbath, and it is quite fair to assume that this sum was not always reached, and not always paid. A single man might live on eight or ten dollars per week and pay his railway fare but it was altogether too small to pay travelling expenses and support a family. Even a family might exist on \$500 a year—*exist* we do not say live—if there were no travelling expenses. But when the head of that family has to travel in three months from Sarnia Presbytery to Hamilton Presbytery, then to Peterborough, and Kingston, and then back perhaps to Barrie and Bruce, and lay out money for railway, stage and hotel fare, by the end of his quarter there is little left to support his wife and children. Undoubtedly the Probationers' Committee made the travelling expenses as light as possible but no committee can make an insufficient sum pay travelling expenses and support a family. We frankly admit that we are not sorry the scheme broke down—we would rather see any scheme break down than see innocent parties suffer under its operation. If probationers suffer now they have not a scheme or a committee to blame. They must blame the whole church, and the churches as a whole must be ready to acknowledge that it cannot devise a proper plan for bringing probationers and vacancies together. One thing should be understood all round, and that is that an increasing number of the best friends of Presbyterianism are beginning to think that there is something radically wrong with that part of our system which provides, or is supposed to provide, for the supply of vacant congregations and mission stations.

A CONSIDERABLE number of reasonable men decline to give the Scott Act their active support because there is no absolute certainty that the law, if passed, would have a beneficial effect upon society as a whole. Supposing for the sake of argument we admit the force of this objection and apply it in other directions. There was no absolute certainty seventeen years ago that Confederation would be a good thing but no one denied that a free people had a perfect right to try the experiment if they thought proper so to do. It is not by any means certain that University Federation will be an unmixed advantage, but if a large majority of those chiefly interested are anxious to make the experiment they certainly have a right to make it. It was not clear beyond doubt six years ago that a change of tariff would promote the material interests of Canada. The people declared for a change in 1878 and a change was made, nobody questioning the right of a free people to make any alterations in their fiscal policy that they thought proper. May we not ask those people who decline to support the Scott Act because, as they say "it is not a sure thing," why they are not prepared to deal with that measure as generously as the people of Canada usually deal with other measures that the majority think are for the public good. It is admitted on all hands that the liquor traffic is a curse to the country, that drunkenness is a terrible evil and that it would be well for Canada if the traffic were abolished. Undoubtedly a larger majority of the people are in favour of trying prohibition as a remedy for this evil than were in favour of trying confederation as a key to the dead-lock of 1864, or the N. P. as a remedy for the hard times of 1878. Then why not try? Are we never to pass a measure of any kind until there is no shadow of doubt that all its effects will be beneficial? If so our parliamentary sessions will be short.

CRIMINAL STATISTICS AGAIN.

THE appendix to the report of the Minister of Agriculture for the year 1883, containing the criminal statistics, was recently issued. It shows that there was a slight increase over the previous year. Attention was drawn a few weeks ago to the classification and number of crimes in the various provinces. We now proceed to notice some other points presented in these returns.

There are columns in these statistics giving the number who use liquors moderately and immoderately, but there is no column giving the number of abstainers accused of the commission of crime. If these returns are complete, if among the 47,141 persons charged with the commission of crime in Canada during 1883, not a single abstainer was to be found, it affords a very strong argument for the practice of temperance. It is somewhat remarkable that, excluding the figures relating to accusations of drunkenness and disorderly

conduct, the disparity between those who use liquors moderately and immoderately is by no means great.

The ages returned are, under sixteen, 992; sixteen and under twenty-one, 2,753; twenty-one and under forty, 14,325; forty and over, 7,862; not given, 6,455.

As to educational status the following are the figures: Unable to read or write, 5,178; possessing an elementary education, 20,969; having a superior education, 350. The largest number of offenders were found in the labouring class, being 10,118; next come those engaged in commercial pursuits, numbering 4,617; professional men, of whom there are 332, are lowest on the list. The number of married transgressors is given as 10,155; widowed, 1,227; and single, 13,870.

Of persons born in England and Wales, 2,942 were charged with offences; Irish, 4,541; Scotch, 1,361; Canadians, 5,645; natives of the United States, 1,622; other foreign countries, 972; other British possessions, 107.

The order in which the religious profession of the accused is given is as follows: Baptists, 658; Roman Catholics, 13,503; Church of England, 4,392; Methodists, 2,385; Presbyterians, 2,727; those styled Protestants number 2,668, and under the head of Other Denominations, 1,203 are classified.

When crime in any country attains great proportions, it grows with accelerating force. The study of criminal statistics is not merely a matter of curious interest. Of all men the Christian patriot and philanthropist ought to give it his serious thought. How to hem in this stream of crime and if possible stop it at its source are problems to which many of the best minds are directing their attention. They are worthy of all the thought that can be concentrated upon them. The reclamation of old offenders is a blessed work, though to human view it is not particularly hopeful. Even in this difficult undertaking not a little has been done by voluntary Christian effort. Prison gate missions are specially deserving of countenance and support.

The great work, however, must be done in connection with young people just entering on a criminal career, and surrounding with healthful influences those exposed to great temptations. Carlyle in his *Model Prisons* says some true and forcible things about those who are on the verge of criminal courses. He bewails the philanthropy that coddles wrong doers and leaves the struggling poor without help or pity. Surely more than is done might be attempted in rescuing young criminals from the grasp of the destroyer. It would be wrong to overlook the efforts made unobtrusively by many self-denying persons who visit jails and prisons, conducting Sunday Schools and Bible classes, and holding religious services; but it is a painful fact, testified to by all conversant with the subject, that from want of proper accommodation in our penal institutions, much of this good work is undone by permitting young offenders to associate with hardened criminals, some of whom delight in making others as bad as themselves.

Kind but firm prison discipline, teaching the prisoners trades, and educating them, may do much, but the grandest of all remedial agencies is the Gospel of the grace of God. Our reformatories and prisons afford a splendid sphere for Christian activity. Many are now engaged in the good work of bringing the Gospel home to them, but their number might be largely increased. To the credit of the authorities in charge, every facility is afforded to all who desire to do good to the inmates of our public institutions.

DYNAMITE DEVILTRY.

SINCE the Irish famine of five years ago Ireland has been the best advertised island on this planet. In the name of a suffering and in some places a famine-stricken people, astute politicians obtained the ear of sympathising nations, for when real distress makes an appeal it is never permitted to do so in vain. Help was given by England and America with no stinted hand. Then the political agitation was blown into flame by the so-called nationalist leaders. An anti-British press in Ireland and America issued a succession of lurid editorials and the emotional nature of an emotional people was roused to a passionate heat.

Whatever real grievances could be pointed out received a prompt remedy. The British Government met all bluster and menace with a remarkable degree of patience and impartiality. Wild and persistent