

Forest Fires.

From time to time in these columns we have most earnestly advocated the preservation of our forests. They form not only one of our chief sources of national wealth but contribute largely to the attractiveness and beauty of our country. Forests, too, materially affect the climate, contributing largely to its mildness and healthfulness, retaining and giving off moisture and cooperating largely with the natural springs in sustaining the volume of water in our rivers and lakes. And now, like a scourge, through the carelessness of individuals and the lack of foresight and effective measures on the part of our legislators, within a few short weeks through forest fires, Canada has been shorn of vast deposits of noble trees, the growth of years, and irreparable loss and damage have been wrought. Surely it is time that our people were roused and that adequate preventive measures were adopted.

Dry Rot.

There is something that should cause infinitely more concern than the devastating scourge of the forest fire, scarring and disfiguring, as it does, the surface of our beautiful land and sapping its material wealth. It is the dry rot of religious formalism and indifference. Infants are being born each day in this Canada of ours and are permitted to grow up unbaptized and untaught. Young men and young women on all sides are assiduously supplied with the means of intellectual improvement, whilst their spiritual natures are being impoverished and starved. The lures of wealth and pleasure are spread broadcast like the nets of the fowler, and myriads are being daily entangled and ensnared. The grim reaper is perpetually claiming his victims; and what, let us ask ourselves fairly and squarely, is the toll of the Church? A clever young lawyer said to us a day or two ago, "I have all I can do in attending to the concerns of this world without bothering myself about the concerns of another world." This, alas! is the unspoken record of most of the eager, throbbing life of to-day, and what is the daily response of the Church to it? Materialism, indifference, pleasure-seeking and spiritual dry rot are rife on all sides. Is it not high time to ask ourselves the question, is the Church to-day adequately fulfilling her divine mission? Is she at all adequately striving to lead men in the trenchant words of Arnold Toynbee: "From bondage through freedom to good will?"

Revival of the Obsolete.

The revival or rather the attempt to reproduce long past history has been a craze in England of recent years but fortunately now dying out, seeing that taking the characters in open air performances has become a trade. The revival has also shown that there remain memories of old superstitions and old hates which it would have been better to have let die down. To turn to a more amusing episode we recall the experience of our contemporary the Scottish Chronicle, which received this summer a copy of The Fiery Cross, the organ of the Scottish Nationalists, who, "as true loyalists," advocate "the restoration of our ancient, legitimate and hereditary Royal Stuart Family. The true Sovereign is not King Edward but "H.R.H. the Princess Ludwig of Bavaria, whose legitimate title is Queen Mary III. of Scotland and Great Britain, and IV. of England, France, and Ireland." There is a rare specimen of the craze for the obsolete. Strange are the legends which have grown up round the Stewart, not Stuart, family. Why are any of their descendants more legitimate than the present Royal family? James I. owed his throne to the doubtful assent of the great Queen Elizabeth and his acceptance by the Parliament. Charles II. owed his restoration to a Parliament, the same power that afterwards deposed his brother. William and Mary had the same legitimate titles to the Crown and also the same as Henry VII., and

his predecessors by success in the ordeal of battle. Finally the last of the Stewarts, Cardinal York, as distinguished for his virtues as his brother was for his vices, received for many years an annuity from the King and to George IV., as the rightful heir, he bequeathed his remaining relics of royalty. It is absurd to be obliged to recall these facts remembering what the Empire is now. The revival of the obsolete is our excuse for trying to point a moral and to provoke a smile.

Loss of Authority.

Authority exercised wisely and firmly in any branch of the Church as occasion requires, whether it be maintained by Bishop or clergyman, goes to prove that there is life, vigour, justice in that branch and that it is true to its sacred commission and best tradition. Where authority ceases to be vindicated it becomes tacitly ignored and eventually condemned. Like dry rot in the branch of a tree, virility and power depart from it, and strength and growth give place to feebleness and decay. The laity are quick to recognize the marked difference between the virile exercise of secular authority established by legislation and dispensed by the law courts and the travesty of a spiritual authority surviving in name but obsolete in power. A modern religion devoid of discipline is but a caricature of the Christian religion as recorded in the New Testament. It somewhat resembles a human body with a modicum of life but with limbs in a state of paralysis.

What Church Union Involves.

It will help everybody, in these days of religious differences and multiplied discussions, if we keep the issues clearly before us and grasp the cardinal principle that must govern our thinking on so intricate a question as Church Union. So many schemes have been propounded, we are in danger of regarding it as a matter for human arrangement instead of being a gift of Divine wisdom. The Divine character of the Christian ministry was well stated by the Rev. Dr. Cooper, professor of ecclesiastical history in Glasgow University, in a recent interview concerning the Australian schemes for reunion: "In regard to the antecedent principle underlying the historic episcopate (namely, the principle of ministerial succession through the rite or ordination continued from the Apostles), both Churches (Anglican and Presbyterian) are," said Dr. Cooper, "already agreed. Both hold the ministry is a gift of the ascended Saviour, transmitted by the laying on of the hands of those who have public authority in the Church." This significant utterance of an eminent Presbyterian shows the necessity of a succession of some kind—Episcopal or Presbyterian—and it is well to lay firm hold of this cardinal principle before going further and becoming involved in the crucial question of the kind of succession which the Anglican Church says should be Episcopal, i. e., "the historic episcopate."

Pampered Tramps.

Dickens, through "Oliver Twist," reformed the workhouses in England and the improvement of prisons, which Mrs. Fry started, is complete. So complete that to a certain class of the community prisons constitute comfortable boarding houses. A typical case is related of a man, aged thirty-eight, being brought before the magistrates for refusing to do his task in a casual ward. The lusty vagrant walked with weary steps into the dock, and rested, bored with waiting, till his case was called. He then reclined in a listless attitude against the dock rails, and when asked if he had any questions to ask the witness paused for some time and with an effort said, "No." For such a class something like the old-fashioned punishment, such as the "tawse" which a Scotch magistrate prescribed lately to unruly boys, something that would sting and not injure, might be useful.

Zeal With Fact.

How many zealous men have failed because they lacked tact? And how many tactful men have partially succeeded through lukewarmness. But where zeal and tact are happily combined with capacity and energy in a good cause both the flood and ebb tide of life are turned to good account. Zeal without knowledge is like a plant of quick growth but short life. Whereas well informed zeal, guided by judicious tact, is like a well managed business or farm, its productiveness being limited only to the capacity and energy of its proprietor. We are by no means sure that the same rule does not apply to a parish, Archdeaconry or Bishoprick.

Rev. T. B. R. Westgate.

Mr. Westgate has been called back to England sooner than he expected, and starts for a new field in German East Africa early in October. He is very anxious to secure a good lantern and set of Tissot's slides, and would be glad to receive any contributions large or small, for that purpose before he leaves England. His address will be in care of Church Missionary Society House, Salisbury Square, Fleet Street, London, E.C., England; and he asks for remittances to be sent by sterling draft on the Bank of Montreal, so as to reach him there on or before October 5th, 1908. This issue will be in the hands of hundreds of Mr. Westgate's friends in time to remit their contributions for the objects named, if they act at once.

GOOD WORDS.

We are continually in receipt of kind words of appreciation from Bishops, Clergy and laity of the Church in Canada, as well as from members of our Communion in various parts of the world which are a source of encouragement. We quote a few from the thousands received recently:—

A Bishop writes: "You have kept up the old excellencies of your paper and added new ones."

A prominent Bishop in the United States writes: "I consider the Canadian Churchman a most excellent Church paper and ably edited."

A Clergyman: "I consider the Canadian Churchman very much superior to any other Church paper published in Canada. In general news, Church teaching and illustrations, it is unsurpassed, and is a marvel of cheapness."

A Clergyman: "You deserve great credit for the very able manner in which you have conducted the Churchman, and ought to receive the support of the whole Church. You have been very fair and just to all."

A Layman: "We have subscribed to your very valuable paper for many years (over 30 I believe) and always look forward to seeing it with much pleasure. In fact it has become 'one of the household' we could ill spare."

A Layman: "The very able editing of the Churchman should be a source of pleasure and a spur to emulation in their own spheres to all true sons of the Church."

A Layman: "The Canadian Churchman is a much prized paper in our home and having subscribed to it for about 20 years we do not like to be out of even one number."

A Layman: "In renewing my subscription it affords me great pleasure to say that the Churchman is an excellent paper and ought to be at least in the home of every Churchman in the Dominion."

A clergyman in the diocese of Ohio writes: "I find the Canadian Churchman not only interesting in its news columns but very helpful and suggestive in its editorials."

A clergyman writes: "I congratulate you upon the whole appearance, character and tone of the Canadian Churchman and am most glad that at last we have a periodical which represents the whole life of the Canadian Church. I shall do all in my power to increase its circulation in the See City where I have just taken up my residence."

A Judge in sending five subscriptions writes: "I have a high appreciation of your paper. It is strong, reasonably broad, a good representative Church paper and I wish it every success as well as yourself personally."