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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 1885.

A PARAGRAPH in a recent article was so expressed as to convey the impression that the Rev. A. Finlay, the efficient Superintendent of Missions in Muskoka, had retired from a portion of that field, and that his labours were restricted to Algoma and Parry Sound. This, however, is not the case; he is still in charge of the entire field.

ERRONEOUS reports of the proceedings of the General Assembly stated that recent proposals to publish a children's monthly paper had been sanctioned by the Supreme Court. The following extract from the Assembly Minutes will show that such were unfounded. "It was moved by Rev. W. D. Armstrong, seconded by Rev. D. McLeod, of Priceville, that the first recommendation, in terms following: 'That the Assembly should at once take such steps as would secure to the children of our Church a *Record*, or other monthly periodical, for the purpose specified in the last section of the report, be adopted. It was moved in amendment by Rev. G. M. Milligan, seconded by Mr. Johnston, that this recommendation be not adopted. A vote being taken the amendment was carried, and the Assembly decided that said recommendation be not adopted.' In moving the amendment Mr. Milligan stated that such publications as *The Sabbath School Presbyterian*, *Golden Hours*, and *Early Days* had for years been issued for the use of our Sabbath schools. He thought that it was desirable to utilize the publications already existing.

THE intelligence of the writers who raise the annual wail about elders not being allowed to take a sufficiently prominent part in the business of the General Assembly may be estimated by the fact that one of them thinks the alleged difficulty may be removed by an increase of the lay representation. This critic evidently does not know that the number of elders is equal to the number of ministers in every court of the Church except sessions, and that in sessions there is an average of about six elders to each minister. Owing to the presence of theological professors there may be a few more ministers in the Assembly, and in some of the Synods, than elders, but everybody knows that as a rule the number is exactly equal. If the number of elders in any given Assembly is not within eight or ten of being as large as the number of ministers, the reason is because the elders did not attend. We are quite sure that the elders of the Church don't like being championed by one who does not know that the lay and clerical representation in a Presbyterian church court are equal in numbers. Indeed, we are absolutely certain that not one in a hundred of them wish to have such questions discussed. They are quite as able to take care of themselves as ministers are, and the attempt to patronize them by such discussions is an insult to every elder in the Church.

IN his speech in the Free Church Assembly on Presbyterian visitation, Principal Rainy stated that it was a good thing for them all to be inspected occasionally, and that theological professors need inspection quite as much as pastors. The Assembly applauded that statement quite vigorously. Of course Presbyterian visitation of a college is out of the question. Theological colleges are not under the jurisdiction of any Presbytery. But might it not be a good thing if a Committee of Assembly visited each of our colleges occasionally for a few days, and in a friendly way inspected the working of the institution? We are quite certain the professors and tutors would be glad to

have such visits occasionally. There should be no feeling of coldness between the Assembly and any of its colleges. There is not a college in the Church that was not brought into it by the Assembly. The professors are doing the Church's work and doing it often in the face of many difficulties. Any step that will promote and increase good feeling between the Supreme Court and our divinity halls is a step in the right direction. If the attempt at consolidation fails, as fail it most likely will, the next best thing is to do all in our power to help on our colleges as they now stand. Why should not the feeling towards our colleges be just as friendly as the feeling towards Home and Foreign Mission work?

THERE is a report from the North-West to the effect that Col. Oumet imprisoned several Protestant members of the 65th Battalion because on a recent Sabbath they refused to attend divine service in a Roman Catholic church. It seems almost incredible that an officer of a city battalion, a leading member of the Quebec Bar, and a member of the House of Commons, should be guilty of such an outrage. Mr. Charlton asked the Minister of Militia the other day in the House of Commons if he knew the facts, but that functionary replied that he did not, but had telegraphed for them. The militia regulations on this point are as clear as words can make them. No Volunteer can be compelled to attend a church other than his own. If Col. Oumet committed the act with which he is charged he should be invited to give up his commission at once. His sword should be taken from him forthwith. If he sinned it was not a sin of ignorance, because it is simply impossible that a gentleman who is a colonel, a lawyer, and a member of Parliament did not know the militia regulations on the point in question. Col. Oumet, however, like every other public servant, should be held innocent until proved guilty. One of the alleged offenders was, it is said, a Presbyterian, and refused to attend a Roman Catholic service on conscientious grounds. The public must know all the facts about this matter, and know them as soon as possible.

IT is difficult at this distance to form an accurate estimate of the situation; but if we may judge from the newspaper reports the Irish Presbyterian Church had a narrow escape from disruption on the organ question. A party of anti-organ members did leave the Assembly and held a meeting in another place. Just how long they would have remained away and what they would have done had a deputation not gone to them with an olive leaf, it is quite impossible to say. The difficulty might have ended in a mere lovers quarrel or it might possibly have ended in a permanent split. The compromise agreed upon was that the anti-organ party should record their protest and that the whole question should be laid on the shelf for a year, liberty being continued to congregations that desire to use the instrument to do so. Calmer counsels may prevail a year hence. However the matter may be disposed of finally, the verdict of almost universal Christendom is that a disruption is too high a price to pay for instrumental music. The party in favour of the instrument would lose more than they would gain by their victory. On the other hand, the party that go out would soon find that they too are losers. All experience goes to show that mere opposition to instrumental music is not a basis on which a denomination or a congregation can be successfully founded. The basis is too narrow and it becomes narrower every year. Quite frequently the families of anti-organ men are in favour of instrumental music.

LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE VIOLATED.

STRICT discipline is essential to military efficiency. Respect for discipline can only be maintained when it is enforced in a spirit of fairness and in full accordance with the code. There is nothing more fatal to the maintenance of discipline than the exercise of arbitrary self-will on the part of those in command. When military despotism is found to be in direct violation of the Army Regulations then a direct premium is offered for insubordination and mutiny. The commanding officer who takes it upon himself to trample under foot the Regulations according to which he is to exercise his command, demonstrates his unfitness for the position he occupies. Interference with the religious conviction of volunteers is simply intolerable.

A glaring case of military arbitrariness is reported

from the North-West. A Montreal regiment under command of a French-Canadian M.P. is largely composed of Roman Catholics. Among the volunteers, however, are some Protestants. On Corpus Christi day a company of the regiment was told off for church parade to be present at the Corpus Christi celebration. A private declined to take his place in the ranks because he claimed his privilege as a Protestant to be exempted from such duty. Then the commanding officer, in accordance with the regulations, complied with the volunteer's request? Not at all. When told by the young man that he had made a promise to the minister to attend the Presbyterian Church that day he was sharply reprimanded for making such a promise without first consulting his superior officer. Other five volunteers then claimed exemption from church parade whereupon three of them were assigned extra duty, and three placed under arrest in the guard-room, one of them being put on bread and water for eight days. The volunteer who undertakes the defence of his country at the risk of his life and who has to undergo constant hardships while on active service had a right not only to his religious convictions but to their free exercise so long as they do not interfere with his duty. This right is guaranteed to every private in Her Majesty's service. Full particulars of the occurrence have not yet been received, but it may be fairly concluded that if the facts are as stated no possible explanation can justify the punishment of volunteers who followed the dictates of conscience in refusing to comply with an unwarrantable order.

The affair has been made a subject of inquiry in the House of Commons. Both the Premier and Minister of Militia admitted that if the facts were as represented the action of the commanding officer was an outrage. Strong expressions and disavowals, however, are not sufficient to meet the gravity of the outrage. There is no desire for retaliation; but if a young Presbyterian volunteer was sentenced to eight days in the guard-room, for declining to obey a command given in express violation both of the spirit and letter of the Regulations, is it right that the officer who gave that command should be let off without a full investigation of his conduct?

It is a curious coincidence that when the matter was brought to the attention of the House of Commons the Leader of the Opposition inquired whether an order had been given excluding Roman Catholic priests from visiting prisoners at Regina. It is noticeable that this error was promptly acknowledged and as promptly remedied. In forbidding access to those awaiting trial at Regina the Premier never contemplated the exclusion of the spiritual advisers of the prisoners. When it was discovered that such a construction was put upon the order the telegraph was at once employed to correct the mistake. Readers of the morning papers cannot avoid contrasting the alacrity in the one case and the ungracious reply to questions addressed to the Minister of Militia relating to the action of the officer in command of the Sixty-fifth Battalion. All that is wanted is fair play and no favour. In religious matters the Government has no right to grant favours to one denomination and impose disabilities upon another. In the eye of the State they are on an equality, and it must be clearly understood that the rights of conscience cannot be trampled upon by any military officer, whether he hold the position of corporal or even that of commander-in-chief. God alone is lord of the conscience.

THINGS WHICH SHOULD BE KNOWN AND PONDERED BY ALL.

THE opening pages of the Report of the Board of French Evangelization, presented to the late meeting of Assembly, contains information which should be known by all citizens of Canada. It was supplied, as stated by Principal MacVicar, by an eminent legal practitioner, and will be a surprise to not a few of our readers. We append the pages referred to:

In reporting to the General Assembly the work of the Board for the past year, it is deemed proper at the outset to direct special attention to the legal status of the Church of Rome in the Province of Quebec. The injurious spiritual and moral influence of its teachings are well known, but the facts regarding its establishment and growing power in this country are less clearly understood. It may be said, in a word, that Romanism, which is coming more and more to mean Ultramontanism, has in this Province all the strength and stability which can be derived from civil law, a powerful priesthood, enormous wealth, a vast array of thoroughly equipped ecclesiastical institutions, and the ready services and support of the Local Legislature. It is impossible to