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The Canada Presbyterian.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4th, 1891

COMMENTING on the "impudence and folly" of an attack made on an English writer by a minister of his own Church in one of the journals of the denomination to which both belonged, the *British Weekly* generalizes in this way:—

Let a Nonconformist minister master the immense difficulties so far as to get a hearing from intelligent and aspiring young men and in the world of literature, and he will find that the curs who snap at his heels are almost always of his own Church, and that recognition comes to him—often too generously—from those whom he least expected to give it.

That unlovely condition of things is not by any means confined to English Nonconformity. Let a Presbyterian minister in Canada get a hearing in the world of letters and the "curs who snap at him" are nearly always ministers of his own Church. Principal Willis understood the situation when he used to lament the lack of *esprit de corps* in the clerical profession.

OUR Methodist friends have a habit of asking distinguished outsiders to address their Conferences, Councils and other great gatherings. If we rightly remember, both Sir John Macdonald and Mr. Blake have addressed the General Conference of Canada. Whatever may be said about the custom it certainly worked well at Washington. The address of President Harrison was a model. Fraternal without being gushy, religious in tone without the slightest suggestion of cant, it made a fine impression. The President is a Presbyterian elder, and the qualities of the solid, sensible Presbyterian elder were clearly seen in every paragraph of his address. By the way, the President's term of office will soon expire. We hear nothing against him except the usual party cries. When he went to Washington it was predicted that his religion would not long stand the atmosphere of the capital. It seems to have stood the test very well, and we hope and believe the Presbyterian elder will leave Washington unsmirched. The President is a good man, and enjoys the respect of all decent men, even among his political opponents. May his successor be equally good.

THE Trumenical Council at Washington made the usual mistake of trying to do too much. There were too many papers and not enough of time for discussion. A lively suggestive paper naturally excites discussion. Half the effect is lost if there is not time for anybody to say anything, and the situation is not much improved if there is a little time and half-a-dozen members are trying to get a hearing. We hope the Pan-Presbyterian Council, to be held in Toronto next year, will not attempt too long a programme. Half-a-dozen subjects well threshed out are much better than a dozen on which there has been nothing said by anybody except the gentleman who read a paper. This is one of the cases in which the half is greater than the whole. Besides, many members of a great body are not quite prepared to sit silently and be read to for a week or ten days. They may think that they can throw some light on the subjects discussed, and quite frequently they can. The man who reads the paper is not the only member who knows anything about the subject. Earnest, lively discussion is the thing wanted. Listening to the best papers ever read becomes monotonous in a week or ten days.

MR. PACAUD, the gentleman who has figured so prominently in Quebec politics of late, took stand the other day and told the commissioners his story in the coolest and most business-like way imaginable. In his cross-examination Mr. Pacaud did not explain why middle-men are so much needed in Quebec. There is no such official

known to the Constitution as a middle-man, or, as the Lieut. Governor of Quebec would put it, "toll gate" men. The theory of the Constitution is that Ministers of State and their subordinates attend to the business of the people. That is what they are paid for doing. Perhaps Mr. Pacaud may describe the services of a middle man. What does he do for his fifty thousand or one hundred thousand dollars. These are large sums of money. The greatest lawyer in England can be retained in any ordinary case for the half of \$50,000. How on earth can a man of Mr. Pacaud's size come to get \$100,000 for services that are unknown to the Constitution? What most people would like to know is why a middle man is needed in dealing with a Government, and what he does after he has been retained. In a young country like Canada where money is not any too plentiful a man should do a good deal for a hundred thousand dollars.

AT a meeting of prominent citizens held the other day in Toronto to discuss the municipal situation, one of the speakers said "they did not want a popular man for mayor, one who could shake hands and be extremely pleasant. They wanted a man who could put municipal affairs in proper condition." Toronto is not by any means the only municipality that needs men of that kind. The nice man who shakes hands, enquires for the wife and kisses the baby is well enough in his way, but his reign in municipal affairs generally ends in typhoid and heavy taxes. The people who pay the taxes are beginning to learn that if municipal business is to be properly done it must be done by business men and not by mere ward politicians who have nothing to do but shake hands, enquire for the babies and work up the "boys." The day of the mere "nice fellow" in municipal politics is about over in many municipalities. It was a costly day for some towns and cities. The primitive backwoods idea that anybody who talks to the people can manage their business, must go, and the sooner it goes the better. The people have learned a few things in the school of experience, and though the fees were high the lessons were useful. About a century hence the Churches will learn that a minister who can do his Master's work is of more use than one who merely shines at a small tea party.

A MEDICAL practitioner of Illinois professes to have discovered a certain remedy for chronic drunkenness, or, as it is now politely called, "alcoholism." If the remedy fails, the failure will not arise from undue modesty in the discoverer. Dr. Keeley, for that is the gentleman's name, said in a recent interview:—

I will take any ditch-drunkard, soddened and saturated by twenty years of alcoholic debauch, sober him in twenty minutes, cut short his worst spell in two hours, take him from inebriety to sobriety without nervous shock or distress, and leave him antagonistic to alcoholic liquors of every sort and kind, and in the meantime give him all the liquors he calls for—and with the confident assurance that he will drop the liquor habit of his own free will inside of three days, never to take it up again while life lasts.

If Dr. Keeley can do that he will prove the greatest benefactor of the human race that this century has produced. Of course the "if" makes all the difference in the world. But why should any one feel certain that in so far as drunkenness is a physical disease medical science will never find a remedy for it. The science that in many cases deals successfully with cholera, smallpox, and other deadly diseases may yet find a remedy for alcoholism in so far as alcoholism is a physical malady. It is admitted, we believe, that Dr. Keeley has treated many cases with apparent success. But then the "faith cure," "Christian science," and several other modern inventions have had their apparent triumphs. In this as in many other things time is the only reliable test.

FROM time immemorial the peasantry of the South of Ireland have been the prey of selfish, designing politicians. The qualities of the Irish heart that make an Irishman a favourite the world over have been used by ambitious demagogues to bring about such scenes as that enacted the other day in Cork. In our own Province of Quebec we have a situation painfully similar. Under wise and patriotic leaders and freed from the trammels of the Hierarchy our French fellow-citizens might easily be among the best citizens of the Dominion. The habitants are a peaceable, frugal, industrious, economical people, but they are easily excited, easily led, and have been taught for generations to depend too much on the Government. Under wise and strong

leadership they could easily have been taught to exercise self-control and encouraged to help themselves instead of looking to the Government for assistance in making local improvements. Before orators of the Mercier and Chapleau type, armed with racial and religious cries, they are plastic as putty. It is difficult to see how a crisis of some kind can long be averted. With a debt of thirty millions a chronic annual deficit of half a million, with letters of credit that cannot be cashed, and the power of borrowing in Europe gone or seriously impaired, sensible people cannot help asking what next? The Dominion can scarcely afford, even if the people were willing, to shoulder a debt of thirty millions for any of the Provinces. The commission now sitting may do something to clear the political atmosphere, but that will not pay the debt. And even if it did there would soon be more debt. Just as long as there are unscrupulous politicians who want votes, and electors who are willing to vote for the candidate who promises to "do something" for them, there will always be debt.

CHRISTIAN WORK CONFERENCES.

IT is sometimes asked, privately of course, whether there is need for all the public gatherings of those associated in various forms of Christian work. The question is occasionally put, Is it necessary to have so many conferences and conventions; cannot those who are enlisted in the work of active good doing go about that work quietly and steadily without periodically challenging public attention and making the usual number of speeches and passing the resolutions customarily submitted on such occasions? Well, there is no doubt that a degree of human nature is visible in conventions as well as elsewhere, but it is still more clear that periodical gatherings of those engaged in the same kind of work are eminently helpful to the workers and advantageous to the cause in which they are specially interested. The time occupied by conventions in general is well spent. They may vary in degrees of usefulness, some being better managed than others, but few who have been in the habit of attending them would be willing to forego the advantages they afford. The quiet, steady worker, invaluable in the sphere he or she occupies, may fall into routine ways it would be better to avoid. Workers occasionally get discouraged, and meeting in convention with fellow-workers has a wonderfully reassuring and an inspiring effect.

Then the real work of the convention, the consideration of the best means of promoting the cause for which it is organized, eliciting and comparing the best thoughts of the most ardent and enthusiastic members, tend to the concentration and intelligent direction of effort. People may return to their fields of accustomed labour physically fatigued, but there is a buoyancy of spirit and a firmer purpose to take up the work, temporarily interrupted, with greater zeal and resoluteness. The convention elevates the aims and motives of those engaged in practical work, enlarges their ideas and braces them to more strenuous endeavour. Holding these stated meetings brings their work under the notice of the public. Interest in beneficent, philanthropic and Christian activity is thereby extended, and thus greater good is secured. The convention as a modern institution is an established fact. It is in harmony with present-day ideas, and proceeds on the principle that it is a proper thing to take the people into its confidence.

Three notable conventions have been held within the last two weeks. The Convention of the Provincial Association of Christian Endeavour Societies at Peterborough brought this expanding agency of Christian work into prominence. The rapid and steady growth of this movement is remarkable. It has demonstrated that it fills a place that was practically unoccupied. The vigour, freshness and zeal of the young people in the Churches had no sufficient outlet, no distinctive field for the exercise of their energies. It was unorganized and undisciplined. This new movement has met with a wide and most cordial response, and the readiness with which the young people have enrolled under its banner is simply surprising. The character of the special work to which it is devoted is no less remarkable. While in various ways tendencies to secularize the work of the Church are plainly discernible, it is to be noted that the work of the Christian Endeavour Society is distinctively spiritual. Its aim is to bring the young under direct Christian influences, and to aid in the advancement of spiritual life in the congregations to which its members respectively