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The Canada Presbyterian

WEDNESDAY, MAY 31ST, 1893.

One of the American Counsel in the Behring sea Arbitration, contended that the seal is a domestic animal. Sir Charles Russell replied, "If so, why is the seal not branded as the American law requires cattle on the prairie to be branded." It is quite unnecessary to say that Sir Charles is an Irishman. Only a son of Erin could have turned the point in that way.

The attempt to open the gates of the Columbian Exposition on Sabbath seems to be narrowing down to a fight between the Government of the United States and the Directors of the fair. Should it take that form, the gates may be opened for one Sabbath, but most certainly for one only. Grover Cleveland does not stand any fooling with his authority.

The unexpected has again occurred. The General Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church has elected an elder for Moderator. And be it remembered the Southern Presbyterian Church is one of the most orthodox in the world. In fact it is strongly conservative. The new Moderator is a judge, and will no doubt discharge his duties in a proper manner. Before saying anything about this "innovation," just turn up your Witherow on the Apostolic Church, and see if the Southern brethren are not moving on 'Apostolic lines. Prof. Witherow says there are no laymen in the Presbyterian Church Court.

During his late canvass in Midlothian, Gladstone took tea in the manse, in a populous mining district. After tea a deputation of miners waited upon him to urge the passage of the Eight Hours Bill. The Premier received them very kindly, heard all they had to urge, and among other things said in reply, that Northumberland and Durham were dead against the Bill. Yes, said one of the miners, but in this matter Northumberland and Durham stand in the same relation to the miners of Great Britain, as Ulster holds on the Home Rule question, to the rest of Ireland. The old parliamentary hand was completely upset, and there was a merry twinkle in his eye, as he related the incident to his friends.

However the meeting of the American Assembly may end, it opened quite pleasantly. One of the pleasant features was the visit of the big Court to the White House, to pay their respects to the President who, by the way, is the son of a Presbyterian minister. The Moderator's address to the head of the Republic has the genuine Western flavour, and contrasts most pleasantly with the conventional platitudes generally used on such occasions. In closing his unique address, the Moderator warmly invited the President to come over to the Assembly and "see his father's old comrades." The President's reply seems rather stiff and stilted, mainly, perhaps, because it is placed alongside of a breezy Western address.

By a majority of 254, the American Assembly has sustained the appeal against Dr. Briggs. The Assembly is conservative, and by universal consent has more representative men in it than any of its late predecessors. Almost a dozen ex-Moderators are members. That the decision, whatever form it may take, will be adverse to Dr. Briggs, is a foregone conclusion. Thoughtful men do not anticipate a disruption though even more than the usual

number of people are making reckless predictions. The typical American is a law-abiding citizen. He has learned self-control by his system of self-government; and he bows to the will of the majority more readily perhaps, than the citizen of any other country. He knows that popular government is an impossibility if minorities do not yield. Besides the trend of the age is against the formation of new denominations. No one knows better than Dr. Briggs that a new denomination is neither needed nor wanted in the United States. Anyway he has no sufficient basis to put a new denomination on. No sensible, honest man, believes the Assembly will deal harshly with Dr. Briggs. Apart from his teachings, he has said much to alienate his brethren, but the majority is strong enough and willing enough to deal generously with him.

A writer in the British Weekly says he has often noticed ladies busy knitting and crocheting during debates in the Scotch General Assemblies. Things must have changed in these Assemblies, since Dr. Duff, Moderator of the Free Assembly, sharply reproved Donald Fraser, and some other students, for reading the Edinburgh Witness, when the clerk was reading the minutes. Dr. Fraser tells us in his autobiography, that no doubt the Moderator "said much that was good and godly;" but the reproof was the only thing he remembered. The practice differs on this side of the water. The American Assembly sternly rules out of the House every printed document, except those connected with the business of the court. They print so much over there, that if everybody were allowed to distribute printed matter, there would be no room for the members to sit. The literature in the Briggs case alone would fill the pews. Our Assembly might easily do a less dignified thing than forbid the pews to be littered with every kind of advertising matter that enterprising advertisers wish to distribute. Of course it would never do to tell grave commissioners that they must not take a peep at their morning paper. A member reproved for innocently looking at his daily paper, as it lay on his knees below the bookboard, might, like Donald Fraser, remember the reproof to the exclusion of all the "good and godly" things said in the Assembly.

A leading religious journal across the line, predicts that Dr. Craig, of the McCormick Seminary, has no chance of being Moderator of the Assembly at Washington. When the ballots were counted, Dr. Craig had a very large majority. A similar fate might easily befall predictions made in regard to the coming elections at Brantford. We shall take the risk of saying that the choice will be Dr. Gordon or Dr. Sedgwick. Than Dr. Gordon, there is no better timber for Moderator in the Church. He is every inch a gentleman; he knows ecclesiastical procedure well, and would hold the scales evenly. But Dr. Sedgwick is a good man, too, and he has more than once come pretty near the chair. His name was mentioned quite freely two years ago in Kingston; but Dr. Wardrope was about retiring, and it was considered a handsome thing to have him wind up his long and useful ministry by enjoying the highest honour his Church could give him. Corporate bodies so seldom do handsome things, that everybody was pleased. A year ago it was considered a handsome and appropriate thing, that the Moderator should be a resident of the city in which the Presbyterian Council was about to meet; and Principal Caven was appointed, Dr. Sedgwick having been duly nominated. Of course Principal Caven could have had the honour on his merits, Council or no Council, but the meeting of the Council was alluded to in connection with the Moderatorship. The Assembly having done two handsome things, might it not be well to keep up the record and do a third by unanimously electing Brother Sedgwick!

The Jubilee literature of the Free Church of Scotland, now being published, teaches many lessons. One of the most important is that the leaders of the Disruption were builders, not mere agitators

for a new state of things. In fact the term "disruption" is itself misleading. There was a disruption, certainly; but there was a building after the disruption, and the ability displayed in the building era, was a thousandfold greater than the ability displayed in splitting the Establishment. It did not require the commanding leadership of a Chalmers to split the Establishment in '43. Almost anybody could have done that. But it did require the constructive ability of Chalmers and his associates to build a structure like the Free Church of Scotland on the new foundation. The building was a much greater thing than the splitting, and a much more difficult thing to do. It is a great pity that this lesson was not better learned in our own country in doing Church work. In too many communities in Canada, the remedy for almost every kind of congregational evil has been "split, and form a new congregation." That is too easily done in most cases. But the men most eager to split, quite often have no constructive ability, and the result of their labours, in too many fields, is two or three weak congregations where one strong one should be. There are few lessons more needed in our own Church than that constructive ability is the kind chiefly needed. Any man with sufficient badness in him can make splits; any creature with a good pair of lungs can shout. What we want is men who can build. There is no Establishment here to make war against. Sin is the most established thing in this young country; and the best way to pull even sin down is to build up a strong, active Church.

Principal Caven's pastoral letter, which we publish with much pleasure in another column, is just such a pastoral as one would expect Principal Caven to issue, and that is saying a great deal. We commend the whole letter to the earnest and prayerful consideration of our readers; and ask their special attention to the following paragraph:—

What are the hindrances to family religion which are operating most prejudicially, and to which, therefore, special heed shall be given in order to their removal? Some would name, with prominence, the numerous societies of various kinds which exist among us, and with which the young are so largely connected. These, it is often complained, so appropriate the time, and possess the heart, that the quieter duties of the home are pushed aside. Even religious societies, and meetings connected with the Church, may usurp the time and affection that should be dedicated to home religion. I desire to speak guardedly here, and not to repeat causeless charges against any true form of Christian service; but if, in any case, attendance on meetings, even of the most useful character, implies absence from family worship, or too late hours, or too much division of interest among a multiplicity of objects, an evil which should be at once remedied surely exists. No precise rule of invariable application can be laid down respecting the proportion of time which should be devoted to home duties as compared with that given to other duties, but the supreme importance of keeping the sacred fire burning on the hearth, must always be recognized. Homes in which there is little prayer and study of the Scriptures, will hardly supply strong men to carry forward God's work in the world.

The fact that a meeting of some kind is being held, is no reason in the world why Christian people should neglect home duties, and run to it. Practically we believe that the best course for every thoughtful Christian family, is to make a list at the beginning of each winter, of the number of meetings it is a duty to attend; and be very careful about spending time on others.

OBITUARIES.

It is with sorrow that we chronicle the death of Mr. George Scott Shortt, at his residence, Red Deer Lake, near Calgary, N. W. T., on Tuesday morning, 9th inst., aged 63. Deceased was born in Dalkeith, Scotland, in the year 1829, and came to Canada in 1851, settling for a time at Kilworth, Middlesex county; afterwards at Walkerton, county Bruce, where he resided for twenty-one years. Four years ago he and his wife removed to Alberta in order to be near some members of the

family who had already located in that district. Mr. Shortt was one who was very highly respected for his kind and sociable disposition and sterling character. He was a member of the Presbyterian Church for 47 years; and for nearly 20 years held the position of Manager in Knox Church, Walkerton. He leaves behind him, to mourn his loss, three sons and five daughters. One of the sons, Adam Shortt, M.A., is Professor of Political Science in Queen's University, Kingston, Ont. His remains, followed by a goodly number of friends, were conveyed to Pine Creek church, and after an appropriate funeral service, conducted by the Rev. Mr. Herdman, of Calgary, assisted by Messrs. Atkinson and McRae, student missionaries, were laid to rest in the cemetery adjoining. The widow and family have the sympathy of the community in their bereavement.

Mr. George Williamson, a highly respected elder of Knox church, Hagersville, after an illness of six months, passed away on May 2nd. Deceased was a native of Monaghan County, Ireland, and came to Canada in the year 1842, when about 25 years of age. He settled on a farm in Walpole township, where he lived until 1889, when together with his wife and two of his daughters, he retired to Hagersville. Mr. Williamson was one of the pioneer settlers in that county who did yeoman work for the Master's cause. In 1868 he was ordained to the eldership, during the pastorate of the Rev. Mr. McRobbie, and for twenty-five years he discharged in the most faithful manner the duties of that office. It is needless to say that he was universally loved and respected, not only for his manly piety, but also for his upright and honest character.

In 1847 Mr. W. was married to Miss Brown, of Toronto township. The partner of his joys and sorrows preceded him to her eternal rest but five months; having died shortly after he was taken ill. Six daughters and three sons are left to mourn the departure of a kind and loving father. Two of his daughters were the constant watchers beside him during the last days of his life. On Thursday, May 4th, the funeral took place from his late residence to the "stone church" where divine service was conducted by Mr. H. A. MacPherson and Rev. Mr. McLennan, of Jarvis. The church was filled and on every hand there were tokens of heartfelt esteem for one who had ever shown himself a friend to those with whom he associated. The sincerest sympathy of all is extended to the bereaved friends who have been called upon to follow to the grave a father and mother within a few months of each other. But they are all buoyed up with the hope that

"A few short years of evil past,
We reach the happy shore;
Where death-divided friends at last,
Shall meet to part no more."

This week many hearts have been saddened by the death of Mrs. Robertson, the beloved wife of Mr. H. Robertson, Q. C., of this town. For some years past her health has not been in a satisfactory condition, yet no fatal results were at first anticipated, when on Thursday last she was taken ill. It soon, however, became apparent that she had been stricken with a more than ordinary illness, for she sank so rapidly that her physicians and friends began to fear the worst. Other medical aid was summoned, but the result of the consultation of three physicians gave but the faintest ray of hope. She continued to sink in spite of all that medical aid could do, trained nursing supply, or loving hands perform, till soon all hope was abandoned except the clinging hope of love, which will not yield while life remains. At last the spirit that had seemed ready for many long hours to wing its flight, took its leave on Monday evening, and parted forever from the husband and daughters whose weeping love followed it to the very portals of celestial light.

For many years, Mrs. Robertson has occupied a wide space in the eye of the social and religious vision of this town, and even far beyond its limits. In social life she stood long the central figure in a wide circle of friends. Her genial and