

THE REV. DR. TALMAGE.

DR. TALMAGE is the master of sensation, and he has now a genuine sensation on hand. The famous Brooklyn preacher is at present on trial before his Presbytery on no less grave charges than fraud and deception. This is the newest thing out since the days of Dr. Dodd, who was hanged in London for forgery notwithstanding the special pleadings of the great lexicographer in his behalf. The *furor* consequent upon the arraignment of Dr. Talmage reminds us of the intense excitement which manifested itself all through the *cause celebre* of Henry Ward Beecher. If the trial be properly worked up, it will set the Brooklyn Tabernacle orator on his feet for the next ten years. It is just the thing to keep up the crowds. We undertake to say that if the Presbytery proceedings are of a protracted nature, the Tabernacle, large as it is, will become much too small for the pressing throng.

Were there any likelihood of proving a libel with such charges, we would be disposed to join with those who feel that a great injury has been done to religion. All newspaper criticism, however, should be avoided while such a serious trial is pending. The accused is entitled to be adjudged innocent till he is proved guilty. But we may say here, that so far as we have been able to look into the matter, we do not anticipate that the proceedings will terminate unfavourably to Dr. Talmage. With reference to his conduct as editor of the "Christian at Work," there were some things which we confess we did not like. There was conflict between the statements of the editor and proprietor of the paper, and the publication of these left the impression that there was a screw loose somewhere. But having had the feeling that there was probably a misunderstanding between the parties and that the correspondence was really a matter that should have been relegated to the waste paper basket rather than have been made public property, we were disposed to let it go without comment. Ministers are often not good business men, so far as their own private affairs are concerned, while frequently displaying vast statesmanlike ability in the management of public business. Their minds are so constantly occupied with the engrossing work of preparing sermons, doing pastoral duty, and possibly writing books or articles, that it leaves little time for attention to matters of detail. It therefore appeared extremely likely that such a reason as this would account for the seeming aberrations from strict honour, which were charged against the editor by the proprietor of the "Christian at Work."

Again, as regards the recent doings of Dr. Talmage, which really contain the *gravamen* of the charges, there is some explanation needed certainly. It seems that like many other churches, the Brooklyn Tabernacle is terribly burdened with debt. Even with the extraordinary popularity of the minister, the crushing load threatened the extinction of this particular church. There has been at the same time a concurrent movement taking place all through the States in favour of wip-

ing out such debts. Wonders have been done in this direction. Kimball has become a celebrated name in connection with ecclesiastical mortgages. Mr. Kimball has a mission, and that is to pay off church debts. It is a noble mission certainly. It is one the success of which would do much for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom. It is one which cannot but commend itself to all who have the interests of religion at heart. But many things have been done in this very business which we cannot approve. Still we are inclined to be lenient with a man who has removed church debts to the extent of millions. And in that same way, we feel towards Dr. Talmage. In his anxiety to save the Tabernacle, and to clear away the mortgages, he has seemingly lent himself to transactions which are of a doubtful nature. His despatches to his brother-in-law to subscribe \$5,000, himself agreeing to make up the difference between the actual contributions and this amount, are not to be commended. But we feel that the Presbyterian proceedings will bring to light that Dr. Talmage has been doing evil that good may come, and that he is a man of honesty and integrity. It will be a good thing if the trial results in warning congregations as well as ministers against contracting debts which they are unable to meet except by resorting to the ways and methods of the world, and against doing anything even to accomplish a good purpose which is fairly open to criticism, and which gives scope to the enemies of religion to turn their batteries upon its ministers and followers.

For one thing, we like the prompt action of the Brooklyn Presbytery in dealing with this matter. That was what was wanting all along in the Beecher scandal—an authority to enquire into it at once and in a kindly, disinterested manner. The Presbytery is not to be blamed for putting their illustrious brother on trial. They are to be commended for bringing it to the surface at once, and we also admire the way in which Dr. Talmage has met his accusers—raising no difficulties, himself voting the relevancy of charges, and asking to have the matter quietly and thoroughly sifted. Only good results can flow from such a course. So that while waiting for the further developments of the case, we cannot but ask our friend the "Canadian Independent" to contrast the course of the Brooklyn Presbytery with that which was followed by the Congregational body in dealing with the Plymouth Church scandal.

KNOX COLLEGE STUDENTS' MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

The last regular meeting of the session was held on the evening of Wednesday, the 12th inst., the President, Mr. Tait, in the chair.

After devotional exercises, and the reading of the minutes of the preceding meeting, the General Committee presented the following recommendations:—

I. That Manitoulin Island be dropped from the list of the Society's mission fields, and that the Bruce Presbytery be communicated with to that effect.

II. That the following fields be occupied by the Society in addition to those decided upon at the last meeting:—St. Joseph's Island, Lake Huron; Strong, Muskoka; and Mayo, North Hastings.

III. That the following gentlemen be the Society's missionaries during the summer:—

1. Mr. S. Carruthers, to Coboconk. 2. Mr. D. Bickell, to Carlow, North Hastings. 3. Mr. Thomas Nixon, to Mayo, North Hastings. 4. Mr. Thomas Davidson, to Nipissing. 5. Mr. G. B. Greig, to Katherine and Emsdale, Muskoka. 6. Mr. C. H. Cook, to Baysville, Muskoka. 7. Mr. Angus Robertson, to Waubesa, Muskoka. 8. Mr. Andrew B. Meldrum, to St. Joseph's Island. 9. Mr. J. S. Henderson, to Strong.

IV. That 4,000 copies of the annual report be printed. All these recommendations were adopted, letters being read during the discussion of St. Joseph's Island, from the Revs. J. R. Macleod, of Sault Ste. Marie, H. McKay, of Kagawong, Manitoulin Island, and J. Strath, of Paisley. A petition was also presented from the people of Coboconk, asking for the return of Mr. Carruthers, and a letter was read from the Rev. James Robertson, of Winnipeg, asking for a missionary for Manitoba. To this last the Society was with regret obliged to send a reply in the negative.

Mr. Jamieson presented a report of the work done during the winter by the Central Prison mission; Mr. Urquhart, reported the work done at the gaol; Mr. Beattie (on behalf of Mr. Farquharson,) that at Brockton and Parkdale; and Mr. McGregor read the report of the Tract Committee.

The following minute was adopted in reference to the death of Mr. Bryden:

"This society desires to express its deep regret and its sense of loss sustained in the death of Mr. John Bryden, one of its active members. During the past summer he laboured with great earnestness and faithfulness on the society's missionaries in Muskoka. His work was highly appreciated by the people among whom he laboured, and we have reason to believe that his efforts to point men to the Saviour not only in the field which he occupied last summer, but wherever he had the privilege of proclaiming the Gospel have been owned and blessed by God.

"As a preacher he was able and earnest, while his genial and unassuming manner endeared him to all with whom he came in contact.

"The society also desires to express its deep sympathy with the bereaved mother and the other relatives who have been called upon to mourn the loss of one whose life was so full of bright promise, and would commend them to the care of Him who alone can bind up the broken heart and heal the wounded spirit.

"While mourning the loss of a dear friend and brother we do not sorrow as those who have no hope, but we rejoice in the thought that he has gone to be a partaker of that rest to which it was the object of his life to lead his fellow men."

The business part of the meeting was followed by an inspiring address by the Rev. Geo. Bruce, of St. Catharines, on his Home Mission scheme.

After a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Bruce, who was present by invitation, the meeting adjourned with the doxology and benediction.

ANDREW B. BAIRD, *Rec. Sec.*

ALMA MATER SOCIETY, PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE, MONTREAL.

The first annual meeting of this Society will be held in the hall on Wednesday, April 2nd, at two o'clock p.m.

BUSINESS.

1. Reading and adoption of Annual Reports.
2. Election of officers.
3. Enrolment of new members and payment of annual fees.
4. Matters connected with the Students' Gold Medal and other Theological Honours, Scholarships, Journal, etc.

5. Banquet and addresses at five o'clock p.m.

All graduates are cordially invited to become members of the Society, and any unable to attend are requested to forward their names and fees to the Secy.-Treas. The annual fee for graduates is one dollar.

Members of Committee: M. H. Scott, B.A., Secy.-Treas.; Rev. T. Bennett; Rev. R. Hamilton; C. E. Amaron, B.A.; D. L. McCrae; and Wm. Shearer.

Presbyterian College, Montreal, March 13th, 1879.

HENRY WARD BEECHER has been reviewing Mr. Blaine's position on the Chinese question, and promises to follow up his first move with other and better ones. In Philadelphia, on the 3rd inst., he appeared before an audience of 3,000 people, and examined and refuted Mr. Blaine's assertions with great skill and success.