

THE BANE OF A PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Such of the Scotch as are unselfish, and upright, may be expected to blush as they peruse the following narrative. A certain "Minister" (sad to say) who, as he proved to be "a stickit" in relation to the pulpit, found his way to the press—"improved the occasion" afforded by his position to cast about with a view to bettering his terrestrial prospects; vulture like, he espied from his eyrie, the work of dissolution, as it had fastened on the frame of the late Parliamentary Librarian, he swooped down on the decaying carcass (so to speak) two years in advance, and induced his employer to bespeak the librarian's position for him, which he calculated he should live to secure; the Prime Minister, whose tenure of office depends on granting such requests, and whose sense of propriety is doubtless tempered by his political needs, acceded to the proposal of the Scotch minister's employer; when therefore, after the lapse of two years, the late librarian succumbed to his disease, the canny minister, who had taken thought for the morrow, presented his claim to the fulfilment of the Prime Minister's promise, and received the reward of his unscrupulousness. His office once secured however, what concerns us more is, a mode in which he has thought fit to exercise his influence in a certain case subsequently, this mode may, in general terms, be described as the pursuit of orthodoxy under false pretences; it manifested itself by the Reverend gentleman addressing a letter to the *Winnipeg Free Press* in which he deprecated the appointment of a former press associate of his to the librarianship of the Toronto Free Library, the minister was under considerable obligation to his former colleague for advice and assistance rendered him throughout the period of their literary connexion, and even subsequently to the minister taking possession of his own librarianship, this circumstance proved to be no bar to his reverence affirming that his former colleague is an agnostic, and as such, was supposed to be unfit to discharge the duties devolving on a public functionary; unhappily the worst part of this sad story is as yet untold, the minister and the alleged agnostic met in a certain book store in this city, subsequently to the propagation of the calumny relative to the latter; his reverence, under these circumstances, once more sought and obtained information, from the man whom he had endeavored to deprive of a good position for life; the injured gentleman however, availed himself of the opportunity afforded by this meeting, to inquire how it had come to pass that the minister had written to Winnipeg, and made the disparaging statement above-mentioned; his reverence at once denied having done so; this denial was promptly met by the re-assertion on the part of the calumniated that his reverence had done this; repeated protestations, and appeals to (supposed) honor escaped the reverend gentleman, followed by a serio-comic lifting of the eyes to heaven, until this deceiver learned that proof of his guilt was at hand, when he at once knuckled down, and acknowledged what he had just before appealed to the Almighty to sustain; all this took place in the presence of a representative of the establishment before referred to, and appears to us to indicate the utter unfitness of the individual in question to be entrusted with so responsible an office as that of the librarian for the Parliamentary Library of Ontario. We leave the matter, for the present, in the hands of those whom it immediately concerns.

ANOTHER BANE OF A PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Canada has little reason for self-gratulation in regard to the moral action of her public men, and perhaps the course pursued by those connected with the Public Library of this city furnishes

as sorrowful an illustration of the fact as we have had for some time. From the unfettered portion of the press we gather that "a certain individual on the Public School Board used his influence to induce those of its members appointed on the free library board to promise, prior to their own appointment, that they would support his candidate."—*The World* 11th July. They doubtless received their appointment on the strength of this dishonorable promise. Again we learn that "The Chairman of the School Board has admitted that a majority of the board, if left to the free exercise of their opinion, would have declared for Mr. Dent," and that "On the virtual admission of the Chairman it transpires that the present librarian was the instigator of religious prejudice against Mr. D." We have the opinion of the Chairman of the Board confirmed by a member of the body who has withdrawn from them in disgust, who says with regard to the election.—"I am convinced Mr. Bain is not the free choice of the majority of the board." We also have the fact that the Committee appointed to enquire into the qualifications of the candidates, were unanimous in Mr. Dent's favor. Unhappily in connexion with the by-play of this drama, we have a minister utilizing a pastoral visit, in order to become Defender of the Faith, with as little prospect of ultimate success in the course pursued, as had the original possessor of that distinction. We have moreover an authoritative denial of the wily charge of agnosticism as attaching to Mr. Dent. The accusation disproved, the crafty policy of silence enables the strategical librarian to retain his ill gotten position for the present, the virtue of *possession*, he doubtless regards as equivalent to nine-tenths of the *moral* law. The number of anonymous writers who have contributed to the discussion of this subject affords an ugly illustration of the social, ecclesiastical, or political chains by which men are bound in this land of the putative free. We incline to think that there is but small prospect of redress of the abuse of power on the part of the Library Board, in the suggestion of Mr. Phipps, to apply for legislative sanction to a transfer of the power of the board to another set of men who, if they did not regard candidates for the librarianship from the point of view of orthodoxy or agnosticism, might consider the demerit of a Tory as equal to that of an agnostic.

PRIZES FOR MEANNESS.

Albeit we anticipate a rush of aspirants to the distinctions above indicated, we are undismayed at the prospect. The first competitor who presents himself, sad though it be to make the admission, is immensely pious, is diligent in his attendance at the Bible readings of the rich, and is persistent in his prominent preaching; as he is of an eminently practical turn of mind, he does his best to prevent others (Christians though they be) laying up for themselves treasures where moth and rust corrupt; he therefore offers them, as recompense for long days' toil—\$3.00 per week.

ENLIGHTENED LEGISLATION.

A Spanish magistrate, who has been exasperated by the adulteration of food which prevails in his district, has issued a proclamation to the effect that "all articles of the nature of wines, groceries, and provisions, which on analysis, are proved to be *injurious to health*, shall be confiscated forthwith, and distributed among charitable institutions."

BIRTH.—Aug. 28th—*The Globe* (on its placard) was safely delivered of a myrmidon.