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THE PRESBYTERIAN YEAR BOOK FOR 1892.

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The Canada Presbyterian.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24th, 1892.

NOT long ago the air was filled with pharisaical vapouring about "Toronto the Good." A city contemporary that knows Toronto well declares that the Ontario capital is a place in which "lean and tortured" street car horses are "getting their hell now and getting it hot." That is a pretty strong way of putting it, but positively something ought to be done in the way of lessening the sufferings of these unfortunate animals.

BY the death of Mr. James McLaren, the Presbyterian Church loses one of her most influential and liberal members and Canada an enterprising and useful citizen. Mr. McLaren was a man of sterling character and sound judgment. He possessed business ability of the highest order, and was as honourable and upright as he was enterprising and capable. He knew how to make money and knew how to use it properly. His princely gifts to various Presbyterian interests are well known.

IT is a little hard on Theological Colleges to have so many writers telling the public that Spurgeon was not an educated man, when all they mean is that he never received a college training. Repeating that fact so frequently tempts people to say, let us have more uneducated men like Spurgeon. Spurgeon was a highly educated man—he educated himself. One swallow does not make a summer, and it by no means follows that because Spurgeon educated himself every other young man can do so too. This generation has but one Spurgeon.

THE last hot summer is always the hottest, the last cold winter always the coldest, the last storm at sea always the most dangerous, and the last great man that died always the greatest. In a hundred places we read that Spurgeon was the greatest organizer and administrator of ecclesiastical affairs that this century has produced. We venture to say that as an organizer and administrator he is not to be named on the same day with Dr. Chalmers. Are the Tabernacle, and the Orphanage, and the Pastors' College, and the other institutions that grew around the Tabernacle—good and useful as they may be—to be compared with the Free Church of Scotland with her colleges, her missions in every corner of the globe, her splendid equipment for every kind of work?

TWO of the judges appointed to investigate the Mercier scandal have found him and one of his colleagues guilty of participating in the profits of the transaction. The third judge, the chairman of the commission, condemns the "toll-gate" in

scathing terms, but does not find that Mercier or his colleagues had anything to do with it. Mercier and his political friends now remind the public that the two judges who condemn the ex-premier were once strong Conservatives, one of them a manager of some kind in his party. The other side reply that Mr. Justice Jette, the chairman of the commission, was once a Liberal and defeated Cartier in Montreal twenty years ago. And thus it is that the Canadian judiciary are going by leaps and bounds into the political arena.

THE Briggs case has brought to the front a class of men who profess to have a holy horror of heresy trials. Their plan would be to deal with a preacher or professor accused of heresy in a sort of moral suasion style. If he turned orthodox good and well, if not let him go on as he may happen to please. Now it must be admitted that as a rule heresy trials are a great affliction, a great evil, but at times an inevitable evil. Supposing a professor in Knox College began to teach unsound doctrine judged by Presbyterian standards, would it be doing justice to the Presbyterians who founded and equipped and who maintain that institution to allow him to go on? Would it not be a gross breach of faith with both the living and the dead to teach other than Presbyterian doctrine in the institution? Brotherly love is a good enough thing, but when destitute of common honesty it is not very lovely.

DR. STALKER told the students of Yale that in looking over old sermons he could tell by the literary style of the sermon the kind of literature he had been reading during the week on which the sermon had been written. The week on which he had read high class literature he wrote his sermon in good literary style. Dr. Stalker is not by any means the only man whose sermons take their flavour from the kind of books read during the week. A preacher fond of controversial reading will unconsciously drop into an argument with some real or imaginary opponent the moment he divides his text. A preacher who reads devotional literature largely will perhaps show it in his prayers before he comes to the sermon. A preacher fond of Shakespeare, Milton, Bunyan and Macaulay can hardly have a poor literary style. There is no man in the pulpit, however, who shows his true inwardness as quickly as the man who does not read at all.

THE disposal of the wealth of the late Mr. James McLaren is marked by the same spirit of equity and fairness with which it was amassed. To his relatives he has allotted a generous share of the money of which he was possessed. His attachment to the Presbyterian Church and his desire for its advancement are shown in the munificent provision he has made especially for securing the efficiency of theological learning. To the trustees of the Presbyterian Church, Buckingham, where he resided, he has bequeathed \$100 annually for ten years. To Knox College, Toronto, to whose funds he had been a liberal subscriber, he devises \$20,000 to help in the full equipment of the library of that institution. A like sum is also given to Manitoba College, but without indicating the special purpose to which it is to be applied. It is quite possible that the authorities of that western seat of learning may feel free to avail themselves of its aid in the new building that circumstances have rendered necessary.

LACK of space last week prevented us from having a paragraph on the proposed appointment of Donald Fraser to a position in the English Presbyterian Church, in which he would no doubt have rendered admirable service. Released from his charge his fine pulpit and platform ability would have been of great use to his denomination. But the Master saw not as the Church saw, and this week it becomes our painful duty to say that Dr. Fraser has been unexpectedly called to his rest and reward. Taking him all in all, Dr. Donald Fraser, was a man of rare gifts. As a pulpit orator he never had a superior in Canada, and not many, if any, equals. His pulpit style was unique. The most intelligent hearer could not say just where his power lay, but that the power was there everyone felt. No doubt the correct explanation was that it lay in a combination of qualities. He was a ready writer, and in his best literary work aimed at being useful rather than at displays of erudition. He was not naturally a controversialist, but could take a hand at that kind of work when duty called. Dr. Fraser was not what is popularly called a "man of

the people"—a character too often a sheer demagogue,—but he was at heart a kindly, fair man, and if occasion required would do battle for popular rights in a manner that might put to shame many so called men of the people. In theology he was a "conservative-progressive" in his later days. He was sound on the essentials, but kept an open eye for anything new and good that might come his way. Taking him all in all Dr. Fraser was an honour to Canada, and more particularly to Knox College.

IN his youthful days Spurgeon was intensely modest. While supplying Waterbeach, his first preaching station, and "boarding around," he was asked to preach in the New Park Street Chapel, London, for six months, and the following is part of the reply sent by the youth who afterwards became the first preacher of his day:—

With regard to a six months' invitation from you, I have no objection to the length of time, but rather approve of the prudence of the Church in wishing to have one so young as myself on an extended period of probation. But I write after well weighing the matter, when I say positively that I cannot—I dare not—accept an unqualified invitation for so long a time. My objection is not to the length of time of probation, but it ill becomes a youth to promise to preach to a London congregation so long, until he knows them and they know him. I would engage to supply for three months of that time, and then, should the congregation fail, or the Church disagree, I would reserve to myself liberty, without breach of engagement, to retire; and you would on your part have the right to dismiss me without seeming to treat me ill. Should I see no reason for so doing, and the Church still retains its wish for me, I can remain the other three months, either with or without the formality of a further invitation; but even during the second three months I should not like to regard myself as a fixture, in case of ill-success, but would only be a supply, liable to a fortnight's dismissal or resignation.

The modesty and candour of the foregoing are perfectly charming, and all the more so because the writer presents such a contrast to the typical youth who imagines that scarcely any place is big enough for him to preach in. If pride comes before a fall and a haughty spirit before destruction, it is equally true that modesty often comes before world-wide promotion.

SERMON FACTORIES.

MANY people who appreciate sermons may seldom think of the labour expended in their preparation. It requires more than pen and ink and a supply of writing paper to construct a discourse that will interest, instruct and edify a congregation. The average minister after being for a time in harness occasionally finds himself in no little perplexity in choosing a text. The field is practically unlimited, and it may be thought that in this respect choice is easy, but in reality it is not always so. Preachers have been heard to declare that the selection of a text is nearly the half of the sermon's preparation. The prudent minister will have several texts in store before he is ready to treat them. Whenever a suggestive text occurs to him, or in the course of his reading or observation a subject presents itself to his mind, he notes it, and thus has several themes in advance that have been shaping themselves in thought according to his opportunities for reflection.

As to sermon-building it is here unnecessary to speak, for have not all the masters of homiletics been profuse in their advice, elaborate in their plans, and exhaustive, if not exhausting, in the rules they have laid down in their massive treatises on the subject of pulpit address?

Vigorous thinking power, a wide range of reading and a good knowledge of human nature acquired at short range by acquaintance with men and women as they are in actual life, and not as they appear for an hour or two in church on Sabbath, will afford ample stores whence one can draw arguments, motives and illustrations for adaptive and profitable preaching. The preacher who in the first years of his ministry carefully and systematically devotes his attention to the preparation of his discourses will have acquired facility in this most important part of his work, and it becomes increasingly easy and delightful. As experience grows his sermons have an added richness and spiritual force. This of course will only be the case if he remain faithful to the ideal he has formed. It is possible in the ministry, as in other fields of effort, that the workman may lose enthusiasm in his work. From one who discharges his duty mechanically the best results need not be looked for. Hard, dry and heartless effort can be profitable to no mortal, and the minister who falls contentedly into a dull routine is heartily to be pitied.

Not merely those who seldom rise above the