

The Canadian Independent

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TORONTO, NOV. 17, 1881.

CONGREGATIONAL WORK IN LONDON.

Tuesday evening, 27th Sept., under the guidance of our old mutual friend, J. P. Clark, Esq., in whose London office these lines are being penned, I seated myself on a tram-car and away to Highbury, which was a suburb, but now is thoroughly embraced in the octopus folds of all-devouring London. At the intersection of three roads was a triangular plot of ground which formed a garden, under the control of the surrounding dwellings, after the manner of many London squares. Some enterprising friends, among whom we may name without invidious distinction, Robt. Sinclair, Esq., of Highbury New Park, a name well known in the Congregational Churches of London, obtained the long leasehold of this site and arranged at once for a chapel building. School rooms were erected; in May, 1878, the building was opened, regular services established, Sunday-school and Mutual Improvement classes organized. The work grew, and now a commodious and imposing structure is being erected, which will, when complete, accommodate twelve hundred people. The occasion of my visit, as a spectator strictly, was a "social," at which it was expected funds would be raised. One could very readily have imagined themselves in America. There were the evergreen adornments, only instead of pine, hemlock, or cedar, the bay and holly did service; flowers of all hues, and paper mottoes. There was the chairman, selected from another denomination, ready at the proper time to head the subscription list with £100 and another *impromptu* (?) friend in the audience to follow with an offer of fifty guineas, provided nine others would do the same. There were speeches, singing and prayer, all duly preceded by tea and cake, over which the ladies presided with their silver and their smiles. There was very little claptrap in the speeches—scarcely any; perhaps because laymen spoke with but two exceptions, and they were, for the most part, those who were interested in the work. £4,000 has been expended on the buildings, which thus far were clear from debt; for immediate wants £700 was wanted, and that evening was expected to raise the same. The building will cost some £12,000, and as at least one half is unprovided for, there will, in all probability, be the usual debt for some poor unfortunate to groan un-

der, in addition to his pastoral labours, and to distinguish himself by extinguishing, should it not succeed in extinguishing him.

LONDON, as embraced within the Metropolitan Police Area, that is within twelve miles of Charing Cross, contains a population of four and three quarter millions (more accurately, according to the census just taken, 4,764,312). Seventy miles of new streets were added last year, and 30,000 houses built. This greater London, as it is called, during the past decade has annually added a Toronto population to its numbers. (Its tabulated annual increase is 87,867.) Is it any wonder that our brethren in London are standing aghast at the problem before them?

IN London there are 95,000 paupers, hopeless, homeless paupers; 30,000 habitual criminals, and a nightly expenditure of forty-five thousand dollars on places of amusement, exclusive of drink. Our Congregational friends are loudly calling for more Christian activity in view of these increased responsibilities. North of the Thames the population has increased 12 per cent., while Congregationalists have only increased their church accommodation 3 per cent. South of the Thames the increase of population during the decade has been 37 per cent., church increase 1 1/4. It will be seen by this that our friends have practical problems before them, likely to tax their energies and resources to the utmost. That they are boldly making these facts known is an earnest of their resolve to overtake the work, and their determined advance to something very like organization is an apparent necessity in this mercantile age, in the overtaking of that work. I may here say that among the laity, whether at Liverpool, Birmingham, Salisbury, or London, where I have been, one sentiment prevails, "We are too isolated, we must consolidate." Of course I know one readily finds that which seems to accord with their own sentiments, but as I have simply been an observer, I do not think myself altogether mistaken therein.

THERE are curious and startling changes going on in the population of England. In the inner circle of London the population decreases, the buildings once used for dwellings being needed for business purposes. The agricultural districts are also gradually diminishing in their population, the towns and cities gaining. Thus in Buckinghamshire, which reports a net increase of 398, reports also in three towns an increase of 2,064, which means that the rural districts have lost thereby 1,666. Also in Wiltshire, with an increase of 1,790, whilst two towns have gained 12,389, the country has lost 10,528. The same remarks apply to other counties. Many once flourishing country churches have been seriously reduced in numbers and influence, and have to be sustained in part from without, whilst around such centres as London, Liverpool, and Manchester, the people gather. The old land, where scarcely a generation past families like serfs were almost tied to their old homes, witnesses now such constant and repeated changes as those with which we are ever familiar. The conditions

of life are ever varying, and energies are continually being spent in the needed adaptation of means to ends. The mere wear and tear of nineteenth century life is enormous.

ONE cry at home and abroad rises from earth's teeming millions to the Christian Churches, Give us light! and for my own part I see nothing for our Churches but constant unremitting toil, and he that is not prepared therefor had better turn back and not dishearten the advancing host. J. B.

RITUALISM IN ST. PAUL'S, LONDON.

Passing the great Cathedral of St. Paul's we read on the notice board that a short service was held at 8 o'clock p. m., in the Crypt Chapel. About 7:45 we wended our way thither. The Crypt is a basement storey, where one gets an idea of the massive foundation of this immense structure. The floor is made up of grave stones and tiles, square pillars of masonry and arches form its architecture, several mural monuments adorn the walls which are whitewashed, there is a communion table or altar with a simple Mosaic pavement around, a gilded cross, chased, and two large wax candles in candlesticks thereon. On either side and some few feet in advance of the table, or altar, two small reading desks and behind each desk a chair. Arranged in one of the open spaces are three groups of rush bottom chairs with a small cushion in front of each. We entered through a low and narrow door, down stone steps into the crypt. Every step echoed as we paced the floor. Save the usher we were alone, under the great Cathedral floor, in the underground city of the dead. A small service book and a copy of Hymns Ancient and Modern was placed in our hands, and we were directed to the seats on the right, those on the left being reserved for females. Gas lights with the plainest of the plainest of fixtures gave light and cast dim sepulchral shadows. A female entered, her garments plain and black, not craped, bonnet after the Quaker type, long veil, face pale, which paleness was heightened by the white lining of the bonnet. Was it a Sister of Charity? And yet this is the crypt of a Cathedral of the Protestant Church of England. She approached with measured step a seat, placed in position the small cushion standing on edge against the chair in front, knelt and devoutly crossed herself, then opening a little book remained thus until the service commenced. Young men came in, about ten, a few middle-aged also, all dropped on their knees as this female, and some crossed themselves. Three other females, similarly robed, entered, and went through the performance already described, the crossing was most unmistakable. At eight o'clock the officiating minister entered, robed in the short surplice, under which was the priest's gown or black petticoat completely hiding the feet, the hood of his academical degree and the black stole. The service was begun "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," when all rose, and the worshippers for the most part made the sign of the cross in the most approved papal style, the prayers and respon-

sive service all intoned, and a short address given on the Saintship of Matthew. During the address the priest stepped out before the altar, devoutly put his head a little on one side, fixed his eyes apparently on a tombstone near his feet, held a short manuscript in his hand, and read away. The entire exercise lasted about forty minutes.

This is part of the Anglican revival, not Protestant. Crypt services amid martyr relics and saintly shrines are mediæval, certainly not apostolic, and had I not known the dome of St. Paul's, London, was arching somewhere overhead, I could readily have believed myself in the crypt of St. Peter's, to which, from St. Paul's, as elaborated to-day, the step seems short and easy. Female retreats, services in crypts, robed priests all manufactured to order, with other mediæval mummeries, are slowly creeping in, and Protestant England, by law, establishing and supporting the same.

A VERY pleasant welcome was given to Rev. A. McGregor, on his return, 29th ult., from the jubilee gatherings at Manchester, by his friends and Church at Yarmouth. We quote from the address given on behalf of the Church and congregation :-

"To the Rev. Alexander McGregor:—
"DEAR SIR,—The members of your Church and congregation have met on this occasion to extend to you a hearty welcome on your return from the Congregational Jubilee, lately held at Manchester, England, and present you with this address as a slight token of the affectionate regard in which you are held by them. . . . They are also reminded that during your absence the tenth anniversary of your Pastorate over the Congregational Church at Yarmouth has passed; and upon looking back over the past decade of its history, they cannot but feel how much its present standing as a Church in this community is due to your faithful labours and unceasing devotion to its best interests; and it is the hope of one and all that your connection as Pastor of the 'Tabernacle' may not be severed for many a year."

We had the pleasure of our brother's companionship in Manchester, and upon the platform, and feelingly congratulate him upon his return and Church welcome. We know experimentally how the latter gives spirit and encouragement.—J. B.

REV. ENOCH MELLOR, D. D., who was known, no doubt, to some of our readers through his long ministry at Halifax, England, or his shorter, though important, work at Liverpool, has been added to the list of eminent men who have passed away during the year. Not an old man, having barely reached his forty-eighth year, he had made a strong mark in Congregational history. In 1863 he was chosen chairman of the Congregational Union. From his address on that occasion we quote a paragraph which appears in the *Nonconformist*, and which we would commend to some of our friends. He says, referring to the Nonconformists of the seventeenth century:—

"If, on some points connected with the polity of a church, and the functions of the civil power in relation to spiritual matters, we have chosen to differ from them, it has been because the events of two hundred years have been educational in their character, and have given to us