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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1885.

WHEN so much is being written about pulpit oratory, and such high and, in many cases, unreasonable demands are being made upon pulpit men we often wonder that some preacher does not retaliate and carry the war into Africa. It may be assumed that the thing wanted in the pulpit by many critics is better oratory—not more spirituality. How would it do to say: "Yes, all right, but let us have better oratory all round"? Is there improvement all round? Not by a great deal. Taking Toronto as representative of the Bar of Ontario, there are no such speakers at the Criminal and Common Law Bar as there were twenty five or thirty years ago. There may be able men at the Equity Bar, but everybody knows there is no Eccles or Hillyard Cameron in the profession now. Keeping away from a dozen or twenty members the average speaker in the Canadian House of Commons is not, perhaps, equal in point of speaking ability to the average man in the old Canada Parliament of thirty years ago. There is nobody in Nova Scotia to compare with three orators of thirty years ago that any Nova Scotian can name. We doubt very much if the average county council of to-day is in any respect an able body than the average council of twenty five or thirty years ago. By all means let the pulpit be wide-awake and, if possible, keep far ahead of the times in the matter of oratory; but let us have improvement all round. Let us have less speaking, but a much better article. The oratory of Canada has not improved as it should have done. People who have to listen should insist that every man who addresses his fellow-men on any topic should have something to say, and should be ready to say it in good style. Why, in the name of common sense, should people be bored every night by some body who has nothing to say, or who has not taken the trouble to arrange his matter so that he can say it in a reasonable time? Surely there is suffering enough in this world without having to suffer from speakers who have no thoughts, or who are too indolent to arrange them.

AT this season of the year, when we are all trying to "do the agreeable" and many are entertaining their friends, the following by Cardinal Newman, on the qualities of a true gentleman, is well worth a careful reading.

The true gentleman carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast; all clashing of opinion, or collision of feeling, all restraint, or suspicion, or gloom, or resentment; his great concern being to make everyone at his ease and at home. He has his eyes on all his company; he is tender toward the bashful, gentle toward the distant, and merciful toward the absurd; he can recollect to whom he is speaking, he guards against un-rememberable allusions or topics which may irritate; he is self-dominant in conversation, and never wearisome. He makes light of favours while he does them, and so to be receiving when he is conferring. He never speaks of himself except when compelled, never defends himself by a mere retort; he has no ears for slander or gossip, is scrupulous in imputing motives to those who interfere with him, and interprets everything for the best. He is never mean or little in his disputes, never takes an unfair advantage, never mistakes personalities or sharp sayings for arguments, or insinuates evil which he dare not say out.

A true gentleman, the Cardinal thinks, "never speaks of himself unless compelled." This is the point at which many Canadians and Americans are almost certain to break the laws of good-breeding. In this

new world most men who are made at all are self-made. A self-made man, if not very careful, is sure to be self-assertive. If a man is conscious of success by his own exertions he is almost certain to speak of his triumphs. A man born with a silver spoon in his mouth has nothing to speak of but the spoon. A man who has fought a hard battle is very apt to speak of the fight. There are men, and fairly good men, too, who can speak about themselves and their doings for a whole evening and never for a moment think they are violating the rules of good taste. And, truth to say, some ministers are blamed for being great sinners in this way. Next to speaking continually about oneself is the abominably vulgar habit of monopolizing conversation and attention. Who has not seen a boor in company who bellowed at the top of his voice for the simple purpose of directing attention toward himself?

UNDER the heading of "Pastoral Instruction for Missionary Students," the *Knox College Monthly* says:

What we wish to suggest under this head is that all our students, university as well as theological, who purpose going to the mission field, should be required to attend, during the previous term, a short series of lectures, or conversational lessons, on some of the more common and important duties that come under the head of pastoral work. We do not propose this merely as an advantage; rather as an essential that has been too long neglected. Most, if not all of us, have felt painfully our ignorance and incapacity in dealing with those who might be seeking admission to the full communion of the Church. Many, again, have felt the need of counsel as to how much of a profession of Christianity is necessary to entitle parents to seek the rite of baptism for their children. It would be well if advice could be given in regard to dealing with the sick and dying—with Free-thinkers—with other denominations in the field. We are convinced that the amount of good done by our younger and more inexperienced students might be much increased if provision were made for their instruction in these and kindred matters. Of course, what we want is not the dreaming of a theorist, but some straightforward fatherly words of counsel from an experienced and successful pastor. The right man ought not to be hard to find.

Than the foregoing, we have not for many a day seen anything more practical and timely in a college or any other kind of journal. It proves that the students of Knox have found out in good time what unfortunately too many do not find out until student days are over. The thing discovered is that success in the college and university does not necessarily mean success in actual work. A student may know very well how to work in his study, in his class room and in the examination hall, and be absolutely helpless in a mission station in Muskoka or Manitoba. It is not his fault if he does not know what to do and how to do it. The Church has not told him. The Church told him how to deal with books, but said little or nothing to him about how he should deal with men. It is with men—some of them not a little crooked—that he has to deal all summer. It would not cost much to carry out the suggestion made by the *Monthly*. We have any number of experienced ministers who would willingly take their turns at the work.

CHRISTMAS.

FROM one Christmas to another appears a long time to the average pupil at school. Next Christmas seems ever so far away. Months even, weeks and days are counted over and over again as the festive time approaches. Later in life, impatience of the slow revolving months disappears. To many, the day held throughout Christendom comes with startling swiftness. The pace at which Time vanishes into the irrevocable past, to not a few, appears to be constantly accelerating. Onward move our lives without pause, and when we reach a well-defined season like Christmas, we are constrained to look back upon the past and forward to the future. Well said Longfellow in one of his few prose works:

Look not mournfully upon the past; it comes not back again. Wisely improve the present, it is thine; go forth to meet the shadowy future without fear and with a manly heart.

Christmas! What memories does the familiar word recall! Memory does go back to other years, and happy homes of childhood, long since dark and silent, gleam again with the light of youth and re-echo the mirth and music of bygone days. And loved ones were there, but not with us now. Amid the placid joys and pleasant reveries of this Christmas Eve, some in subdued tones may have reason to whisper:

O for the touch of a vanished hand
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Christmas! The church bells ring out cheerily

through the crisp morning air. Merry voices are heard from attic to basement. The children's gift of speech is wonderfully enlarged, as they go into ecstasies over the gifts which dear ones have provided through the agency of that wonderfully kind, versatile and ubiquitous genius, Santa Claus. Nor are the children of a larger growth less joyous. In more subdued tones, they fervently reciprocate the complimentary wishes of the season. Where true affection dwells, the humblest home is radiant with a brighter light than even that which guided the shepherds to the place where the Young Child lay.

This brief day of gladsome rest from their customary toil will bring soothing thoughts to many in every land, who sometimes chafe over the inequalities and burdens of life. From the far-distant past, echoing through the ages, come the blessed words of the angels' song: "Peace on earth, good will toward men." And they will fall peacefully on the ears of generations yet unborn, for in the coming years they will have a still deeper significance. They are prophetic of the time when He who lay in the manger at Bethlehem shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.

To the ever-increasing circle of readers of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN, old and young, in the homely and familiar words, but in no merely formal sense, we cordially wish A MERRY CHRISTMAS, and, when it comes, A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

PHILANTHROPIC WOMEN.

WOMAN'S influence in the sphere of Christian and philanthropic work is now a distinctly recognized power. Her sympathetic nature enables her to see with far-reaching insight the evils which not only deteriorate but, remaining unchecked, would overthrow human civilization. Woman is not a mere dreamy idealist spending her time in picturing a golden age that could only exist in imagination and fancy. When she sets herself to work she is intensely practical.

As the Gospel of Christ has proved such a boon to woman, she in turn seeks to extend the blessings of salvation to others. How great is the obligation which the modern missionary enterprise owes to the self-denying efforts and the consecrated lives of the noble women who at home and abroad have laboured for the salvation of those in heathen darkness. The various Woman's Foreign Mission Societies have not only been instrumental in largely augmenting contributions of means for the propagation of the Gospel, but by their sustained and systematic efforts they have been enabled to arouse and maintain increased interest in the great work in which the Christian Church of our time is engaged.

Another sphere of Christian and beneficent work in which woman's influence is becoming increasingly felt is the great Temperance Reformation. In the name of suffering women and children, pointing to ruined homes and blighted lives, devoted workers plead earnestly for personal abstinence and restrictive legislation that the ravages of the drink curse may be stayed. Woman's Christian Temperance Unions in various lands are exerting a powerful influence for good, and that power is steadily increasing. While publicists and politicians are discussing measures and are swayed hither and thither by conflicting forces, women are steadily and perseveringly pursuing their beneficent work in moulding social life and opinion to purer aims and higher endeavour.

The extended report of the proceedings at the twelfth annual convention of the United States National Woman's Temperance Convention has been recently received. Several Canadian delegates were present on the occasion. The report contains much very interesting and suggestive material. Perhaps one of the most interesting portions of it is Miss Willard's presidential address. She takes a wide and comprehensive survey of the whole field embraced in the varied labours of the Union. Its efforts are decidedly aggressive, but it is by the spirit of love its members seek to conquer. Appropriate means are employed to enlist on the side of Temperance all the different agencies that influence the minds both of old and young. The church, the school, from the kindergarten to the higher educational institution, the press, political organizations, social amusements are all fitting spheres for the activity of these earnest Temperance workers.

Worthy of special notice, however, is the united effort on a grand scale that is now being effected. It is nothing less than a sustained attempt to form a