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EASTERN GENERAL AGENT.

MR. WALTER KERR—for many years an esteemed elder of our church—is the duly authorized agent for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN. He will collect outstanding accounts, and take names of new subscribers. Friends are invited to give any assistance in their power to Mr. Kerr in all the congregations he may visit.



TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1887.

SOME people who might know better have the impression that the Presbyteries of Western Ontario far excel the Presbyteries of the east in liberality. Let those who labour under this delusion turn up the Blue Book, and glance at the column for the Schemes in the report of—well, say the Presbytery of Lanark and Renfrew. If there is any better column than that we fail to find it.

THE meeting of the Prison Congress was successful in the best sense of the word. The members were all specialists of the highest order, and of course handled their topics well. The discussions were instructive and stimulating, and were well suited to produce one most desirable and most important impression, viz., that a prisoner is a being to be reformed as well as punished. May the powers above rub that truth into the memory and conscience of every judge, sheriff, gaoler and turnkey in Canada.

IT is admitted on all hands that there is a certain amount of sentiment in favour of union between the American Presbyterian Churches North and South. An interesting and most important question is being discussed regarding this union sentiment at the present time: Does this sentiment arise from a broad and deep conviction on the part of the people, or is it manufactured by those who are speaking and writing in favour of union? And, by the way, this is always a most important question in connection with any movement. There is all the difference imaginable between a broad, deep conviction which formulates itself into action and a temporary wave of feeling lashed into action—perhaps furious or even frenzied action—by outside influences.

GRAND juries may visit, and inspectors may inspect, and specialists may discuss gaols until doomsday, but little improvement can be made until municipal councils provide suitable gaol accommodation. The Toronto City Council is mainly responsible for the horrible den in which prisoners are confined below the police court. The County Council of York have to answer for the lack of classification in the gaol. Careless, stupid or cruel officials may aggravate the evil, but the best of officials cannot classify prisoners if there are not rooms to put them in. The control of the liquor traffic has recently been taken with the best possible results out of the hands of local municipal bodies. Might it not be a good thing to provide gaol accommodation on some other plan?

HARVEST is over. In many parts of Ontario it was over a month ago. Why should Thanksgiving Day be put off until near the end of November? Last year the 18th of that month was appointed, and everybody knows the time is not the most suitable. Toward the end of November the weather is dull, the days short, the roads bad and all the surroundings unfavourable as compared with a month earlier. October is usually one of the most pleasant months in the year. Is there any reason why Thanksgiving Day should not come about the middle of that month? There will be no use in saying anything on this matter a month hence. The right time to speak out is now. It is just as easy

for the Government to name a day in October as one a month later. No doubt the powers that be are willing to select the most suitable time. All that need be done is to call their attention to the matter. We never heard a reason why Thanksgiving Day should come toward the end of November. Perhaps all that any could say was that "it happened so." There are many reasons why it should come a month earlier.

WHEN Dr. Field's open letter to Ingersoll appeared in the *Evangelist* a St. Louis correspondent modestly informed him that he would have been better employed in discussing the temperance question. Another correspondent comes to the Doctor's aid in this way:

Would to God all temperance people were temperate! But they are not. They too often lift up their frantic cries so as to drown the voices of preaching, of prayer, of praise, and of reason itself. They lift their "cause" above the Bible, and in defiance of the Bible, above the Church, and above Christianity itself. I know of what I speak, as a sorrowful witness of the absurd and mischievous extremes to which people calling themselves Christians can go. I could tell a tale of sowing dissension in Churches, of Sabbath desecration, of pharisaical bigotry, of uncharitableness, meddlingness, and bitterness exhibited under the banner of "Gospel Temperance," that would be painful to every candid Christian man, and as true as it would be painful.

If there are any temperance people of this kind in Canada they should be promptly placed on a back seat, and kept there until agitation for the repeal of the Scott Act is over. A dozen such men in each county can do more to repeal the Act than twice that number of liquor dealers.

PRINCIPAL GRANT is in Toronto for the purpose of bringing the Jubilee Fund of Queen's University under the notice of all interested in higher education, and as might be expected is meeting with his usual success. A public meeting is to be held in old Shaftesbury Hall next Tuesday evening, the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Alexander Campbell, one of the founders of Queen's University, presiding, at which addresses will be made by the Principal, Professor John Watson and others, on the future of University education in Ontario, and on the claims and needs of the university. This will be the first appearance before a Toronto audience of Professor Watson, who so admirably fills the chair of mental and moral philosophy and the author of "Kant and his English Critics," and other philosophical works; he was the youngest recipient of the honorary degree of LL.D. from Glasgow University. The meeting should bring out all the friends of Queen's, and these are neither few nor far between. We have heard Principal Grant say that he had a general claim on every intelligent member of the community, a special claim on Presbyterians and an extraordinary claim on those congregations that established Queen's and have done most for it in the past. There is hardly need to bespeak a large attendance and a cordial and sympathetic hearing in Toronto.

IT would be well before going farther to have a definite idea of what the convention which decided in favour of a third party means by that movement. Is it intended that this third party shall pass upon all political questions, or confine its attention to Prohibition only? A similar step was taken the other day by a convention at Syracuse, and the *Christian at Work* says they dealt with every plank in the ordinary political platforms except the Tariff. Is it intended that our third party shall take up every question except the N. P.? Will its platform embrace all the planks of the other parties plus Prohibition? There are other questions on which it would be well to have light. Parties cannot be kept in good working order without organization and machinery, and the running of the machinery is expensive. It is said that the preparation of the voters' lists under the new Franchise Act costs in some constituencies from \$1,000 to \$3,000. Are the Temperance people prepared to pay anything like this sum? What reason is there to believe that any considerable number of Temperance voters will leave their own party and join this third party? Is the fact that an elector votes for the Scott Act when it is submitted alone to the people any guarantee that he will leave his party at a general election and vote for a Prohibition candidate when a score of other issues are before the people? These and many other most important questions should be well weighed before any further steps are taken toward the formation of a third party.

WHEN WILL THE REIGN OF PEACE BEGIN?

WHEN the first of the series of great industrial exhibitions was held in London in 1851, there was a temporary popular inclination to entertain the idea that the era of universal peace was within sight. To all appearance that idea seems as beautiful and as attractive as ever, but by most people it is regarded as an apparently impossible dream. Since then vast armies have met on many battlefields, and the ravages of war have left their indelible impressions. The Crimea, the plains of India, the Duchy of Schleswig, the Virginian valley, Bohemia, Alsace and Eastern France, and the Danubian Principalities have been successively the scenes of gigantic warlike encounter. Sadowna and Sedan, the fall of Richmond, the capitulation of Paris and the capture of Plevna were decisive, and became for the time landmarks in modern history. But what have these destructive conflicts settled? What great good have the respective successes and defeats conferred on mankind? True, the curse of slavery has been wiped out in blood on the American continent; but was the freedom of the slave impossible of achievement by constitutional means? Geographical boundaries have been changed, and greater popular freedom has in some instances been gained; but have the gains been commensurate with the tremendous expenditure of human life and treasure which these wars on a great scale have entailed on many nations?

And now are the victors and the vanquished content with what has been accomplished by the sword? Is France reconciled to the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, or Germany satisfied with the triumphs secured by force of arms from the skirmish at Saarbruck to the capitulation at Paris? Has Russian ambition been sated or Ottoman decrepitude arrested by the treaties of St. Stephens and Berlin? The era of universal peace is not yet visible above the horizon. All Europe is on a war footing. Enormous standing armies are maintained not only by the Great Powers, but even Bulgaria and Belgium have felt it prudent to add to their military strength and take all the precautionary measures they can in case a European war breaks out.

The tension caused by the disproportionate armaments in Europe has been great. The marvel is not that peace during the present year has been maintained, but rather that the torch of war has not been lighted. It is only due to diplomatic manoeuvres and the personal feelings of the German Emperor that 1887 has not witnessed a conflict of the nations. It has not been from the access of more reasonable and pacific desires either in France, Germany or Russia that the sword has remained in its scabbard. The desire for revenge and the reconquest of lost territory is as strong in the French mind as ever; Germany is as fully bent on the maintenance of the supremacy she has gained; and Russian hunger for Turkey and extension of territory in Eastern Asia is unappeased; while England, Austria and Italy manifest a determination to maintain the integrity of their present possessions. The present condition of European affairs is inflammable in the extreme, and a comparatively trivial incident might lead to wide-spread conflagration.

Members of the Peace Congress, even amid the many warlike indications of our time, have not lost faith in their principles, and what is more, they have the courage to make public avowal of them. They are not likely, amid present unsympathetic conditions, to attract popular attention, far less make a deep impression on the popular mind. But, after all, are these principles so very unreasonable and untimely? Is war, with all its terrible and inevitable evils, so very merciful and reasonable? Is it in keeping with the spirit of modern civilization that national contentions can only be settled by barbaric brute force? Is it in harmony with the teachings of Him who is styled the Prince of Peace, and whose coming was heralded by angel voices proclaiming Peace on earth and goodwill toward men, that professedly Christian nations should have their resources taxed to the utmost in keeping millions of able-bodied men in idleness, only that they might be ready to meet in mortal combat fellow-men whom they never saw before, and with whom they have no quarrel? War has had its day: it is about time the voice of peace were heard.

It is certain that a time will come when universal peace shall prevail. This is not the dream of mere enthusiasts, nor the fad of a few perverse cranks. The arbitrament of reason is destined to replace that of