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The Canada Presbyterian.

C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, MANAGER.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25TH, 1894.

HAVE you a son or daughter away from home? Send the absent one direct from office of publication, THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN, filed each week with wholesome and attractive reading. Only One Dollar till 31st Dec., 1894.

ROSEBERRY is not as eloquent or as learned or as pious as Gladstone, but he has some strong points the Grand Old Man did not possess. He is a handsome and rich widower of forty-seven. Not a few people seem to take as much interest in his matrimonial future as in his politics.

SOME people laugh and some feel ashamed at a little incident that occurred in the British House of Commons the other day. A Home Rule member vigorously protested against an increase in the tax on spirits, because whiskey, as he alleged, is the national beverage of Ireland. The Finance Minister knocked the bottom out of his protest by showing that England and Scotland are a long way ahead of Ireland in the per capita consumption of spirits. Scotland stands easily first.

COUNT the number of Presbyterians in the Ontario Legislature, see what marked ability they display in shaping the legislation of the Province, hear how splendidly some of them can discuss a question on all sides and then ask yourself why a representative committee of the General Assembly might not frame a measure that will prevent the supply of our vacancies from becoming a scandal. We often hear that the church courts are greatly superior to political bodies. Then, in the name of common sense, let them give the church the legislation it needs.

THE polity of the Presbyterian church is time-honoured and we believe Scriptural. Nobody seriously thinks of changing it to any great extent. Yet the hard fact remains that a large number of the cases that are appealed from Presbyteries to Synods and perhaps drag along and disturb for years, could be settled in a few hours by two or three level-headed business men not in any way connected with the case until they had it submitted to them for decision. Cases are hard to settle by local courts because of the network of local antipathies, personal jealousies, private interviewings and secret correspondence in which many of them are enveloped.

IT may not be possible to avoid trials for heresy but their evils might easily be reduced to a minimum by the exercise of a little self-restraint and common sense. There is no reason in the world why mission work, theological education, the state of religion and every other important branch of

Christ's work should be ignored or forgotten and the mind of the church fixed on any case of alleged heresy that may be pending. Nor is there any reason why people in or out of the church courts should display as much heat in discussing a heresy case as some of the politicians they pray for display in making capital for an approaching election. To be of any weight with thoughtful people a decision must be the product of judicial minds working in a judicial manner. Not long ago Principal Rainy said that the church must rule rather by influence than by authority. Authority without influence may easily wreck a church as it has wrecked many a congregation. The way not to have influence in a trial for heresy is to get excited and speak of the trial as if it were about the only thing in the church.

IF there is a larger attendance of members at the meeting of the Synod of Toronto and Kingston soon to be held in Toronto, the increase will most likely suggest to some of the members the desirability of meeting in Toronto every year. The perambulating system has some advantages. It is pleasant for the members to go to a new place each year, get acquainted with good Presbyterian people, enjoy their entertainment and have a good time generally. The people seem to enjoy it too, and there is always a possibility that a meeting of Synod or Assembly may do them some good. We submit, however, that the time has come when the general good should be considered and the good can never be general if one half of the Synod never attends. Probably the Toronto meeting may throw some light on the matter. Better meetings than those recently held in Lindsay, Peterboro' and other places are not likely to be held anywhere, but perhaps much larger ones might be held in Toronto. The theory is that all members of Synod are present. We do not care to discuss the extent to which the theory differs from the practice.

THE Patrons should disavow any connection with the attack that is being made on the High Schools and Collegiate Institutes of the Province. These institutions give an average farmer's boy the only chance he has to get a better education than he can receive in his own school section. They are as much the poor man's school as the Public Schools are. Wealthy men can send their sons to any part of the world to receive an education, but if a poor man's son is not educated at or near home he can never be educated anywhere. Thousands of Ontario boys are dependent on the High Schools and Institutes for their start in life. It is easy to say that boys should stay on the farm; and the High Schools and Institutes make them dissatisfied with the farm. Half a dozen boys cannot stay on a hundred-acre farm. Thousands of boys in Ontario have no farm to stay on. Are they to have no chance for a fair start in life? This attack on the High Schools may seem plausible, but we venture to say that when it is threshed out a little, those who intended to make political capital out of it will feel sorry. The High Schools give many a farmer's boy and many a poor man's son the only chance they get for a good start in life.

THE General Assembly will meet this year in St. John. There will be an effort made, we believe, to have the meeting of 1895 in Winnipeg. St. John and Winnipeg are good places for an Assembly to meet in. The Presbyterians in both places are among the best people we have. A member of Assembly who cannot enjoy his visit to either city has no capacity for enjoyment. There are a score of other places in which the members of Assembly can have a royal time. In fact they can have a good time in any town in the Dominion large enough to entertain them. The main question, however, is not one of entertainment. The question a good many thoughtful Presbyterians are beginning to discuss in real earnest is whether the interests of the church would not be promoted by meeting in one central place. The perambulating system is well enough for a small body in a small country. Ours is a large body and Canada is a large country. To expect a man to travel from Halifax to Victoria, or from Victoria to Halifax to attend a meeting of Assembly is to expect something unreasonable. We doubt very much if, under ordinary circumstances, it is the duty of a commissioner to travel six thousand miles and spend at least two hundred dollars to attend an Assembly meeting. Fathers and brethren, is it not about time the Supreme Court had settled down to business in some central place?

AS we predicted weeks ago the wave of economy that has struck the Province is making itself felt, or perhaps we should say, *seen* in the Legislature. The Government, not wishing to be behind their rivals, yield a little. One of the modes of retrenchment suggested is the turning of chronic lunatics over to the municipalities. That simply means that the unfortunates would be quartered upon their friends or turned loose upon the road. Few municipalities would care for them. For years many wealthy municipalities have been in the habit of shipping aged people, cripples and other helpless unfortunates into the neighboring cities and towns to be cared for. Many have fought bitterly, and with too much success, against the establishment of poor-houses. Does any person suppose that these municipalities would take care for the insane. What facilities have they for doing so even if they were willing. Who that has ever seen a worn-out family trying to take care of one of its members bereft of reason does not feel disgusted with the politics that makes such proposals as turning the insane out of the asylums a bait to catch the Patron vote. The proposal is a rather poor compliment to the Patrons. The Government should have stood firm on the question. It is all very well to grow eloquent over the inalienable right of appeal possessed by every member of the Presbyterian church. Just fancy a man without means trying to go from Victoria or Vancouver to St. John or Halifax to get a hearing before the Supreme Court. As a matter of fact the man has no appeal to the Supreme Court.

SYNOD OF HAMILTON AND LONDON.
SOME THINGS WHICH IT
SUGGESTS.

ONE can hardly attend such a gathering, look over it and hear the roll called without having recalled the words of Scripture: "The Fathers where are they, and the prophets do they live forever?" So many names have been dropped, and so many faces once familiar are seen no more, that one especially, who is himself on the shady side of life, can hardly but long for the "touch of the vanished hand, and the sound of the voice that is still." Thus, without being conscious of it in his own case, he notices the marks of advancing age in others; the step, the movements that once were quick and agile are slow and feeble, the voice that was strong and resonant now requires effort to be heard; the laugh even, that formerly was ringing and merry, has almost an air of melancholy in it by contrast with what it once was. The younger men coming in and gradually taking the place of the older, who not unwillingly sit still and yield it to them, until some really grave case comes up, or some knotty tangle in the business arises when the older men take the matter in hand, are noted and inwardly commented on. The older members of this Synod are, we should say, growing old gracefully, are considerate of the younger men who, on their part, while mainly in their conduct, are respectful and becomingly deferential towards their elders.

THE number of cases of appeal at this Synod was, we should hope, unusual. In the treatment of every one of them, but especially in that of the Rev. Angus MacKay, of Lucknow, the patience of the Synod was most sorely tried, and nothing could surpass the patience it showed, and the spirit of fairness and charity towards the individual which the whole Synod manifested. It was simply admirable, and the Rev. Mr. MacKay may well congratulate himself that his case fell into the hands of such a body of men. While the importance of rendering justice and fairness to the humblest individual can hardly be over-estimated, it is well worth while considering whether that end could not be reached by some shorter method than that taken in this case. It does appear altogether too bad, that the time of such a large body of men should be taken up listening for weary mortal hours to the presentation of a case in a mixed up, irrelevant, inconsequential way by the appellant personally, when by suitable counsel it might have been presented far more clearly and forcibly in the course of twenty minutes or half an hour. Perhaps no better way can be found, but it is evident that another case or two like that of Mr. MacKay and presented as it was would have occupied the whole time of the Synod, and all the other important interests of the church within its bounds would have to suffer, unless the Synod was prepared to sit a whole week instead of two days or a little over.