

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

Vol. 25.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9th, 1896.

No. 50.

Notes of the Week.

One gets a very striking illustration of the mental activity of our day, so far at least as English-speaking people are concerned, from the pages of the *Independent* of November 19th, in which is to be found a list of "the best books of the year." The whole list with brief remarks occupies about six pages of that large paper. It begins with theology, which, next to history, takes up the largest space. The first place in theology is given to Professor Salmond's "Christian Doctrine of Immortality," and the next to Prof. Ramsay's "St. Paul the Traveller." The full classification, besides theology, is, "Religious and Religions, Philosophy and Science, History, Biography and Letters, Travel and Adventure, Popular Science, Politics, Economics and Finance, Sociology, Sanitary and Medical, Art and Illustration, Archaeology and Folklore, Comedies and Sports, Cyclopedias, Handbooks and Collections, New Editions of Old Books and Miscellaneous."

Messrs. Moody and Sankey have been holding a series of religious meetings in New York, and although the gospel story every year grows older, and old things for the most part pass away and are forgotten, the preaching of the gospel never loses its charm. The interest has grown from day to day in depth and extent, so that on one Sabbath evening not only was Carnegie Hall filled, but two neighboring churches as well. The aim of Mr. Moody has been to rouse Christian people to a sense of individual responsibility for the salvation of souls. As to the permanent results of such services, Mr. Moody testifies, and he ought to know, that through all these past years he has been constantly coming across people who told him of their conversion at the revival services held in that city twenty years ago. "Some fall away," he says, "but that the general effect of that kind of work is permanent, no one who has followed up the Christian work of the land can doubt."

Among the many signs, which daily multiply on every hand, that Christmas is coming, is the appearance and make-up of the exchanges which come to the editor's table. Monthlies for December are already, some of them, on hand, with covers embellished, some of them tastefully, others hideously; many with figures draped more or less gracefully, or with figures nude, seldom attractive, often disgusting or immoral, and generally objectionable. Advertisements of all kinds to tempt purchasers, suggestions of presents of every imaginable sort and of all values, to suit everybody's means; and articles specifically upon the subject of Christmas gifts, furnishing hints or full length descriptions, telling to whom presents should be given, and how best to do the whole business. We note these good suggestions, that those who have homes should think of boarding-house people, of the poor, and those who are likely to be forgotten; fix upon those to whom you wish to give, then carefully consider the sum you have to expend; and that the father, mother, husband, or wife of the home should claim special consideration.

The first skirmishes in the coming municipal elections for mayors, councillors and other offices have begun to be made. Some men are being sought for to fill offices higher and lower for which their fellow-citizens believe them to be qualified, and in other cases men are seeking the offices which they themselves

think they are well qualified for, or entitled to. There is a distinct difference in the cases of the office-seeking man and the man seeking the office. How candidates stand toward prohibition will very generally this year be an important factor in elections. In any case, it is most desirable that good men whom their fellow-citizens by request or by vote call to fill places of municipal trust should, as far as possible, be ready to respond to such calls. Because the office or work is purely local, may entail some trouble or risk of being found fault with that should deter no good strong man from such service. Purity, integrity and true patriotism in the lower ranks of service will soon bring it about so that nothing less will be able to get a foothold in the higher ranks.

St. Andrew's Day, sacred to Scotland's patron saint, and also to Russia's, has come and gone, and been kept with the usual festivities of pipers, and dances, and dresses, and feasting, and music, and salutations and greetings of brither Scots to brither Scots in every part of the world, for where is the canny Scot not to be found? Not a few of these greetings, it must be confessed, one would need to be very much of a Scot to understand, but so far as they are intelligible to ordinary mortals they all appear to be cheery, hopeful, look on the bright side of things, and some of them are suggestive also of the bibulous character so often ascribed to Scotchmen, and in which St. Andrew's night gave a fair occasion to indulge. What the state of things is now in that respect we are not competent to say, only we are sure that less of the bibulous than has often marked St. Andrew's Day celebrations would be far more becoming the memory of a saint and more worthy of Scotchmen. With all their failings, however, of this and other kinds, it must be acknowledged that the world in general could not have got on very well without the ubiquitous Scot.

The mind shrinks back appalled from the contemplation of what might have happened in India in the state of famine now threatening large portions of it, but for the precautions which British foresight has taken to avert such a calamity, or, so far as possible, if it could not be averted the fatality at least lessened. No fewer than 72,000,000 people, a number greater than the population of the United States and Canada, are likely to be more or less affected by the threatened danger. Very elaborate and thoroughly organized arrangements have been made by the Indian Government to cope with such an emergency. Add to these the facilities which now exist for the transportation of food supplies from any quarter to the ends of the earth, and after all what want and suffering and disease are sure to be the lot of many. Happy Canada! happy Ontario especially, where we know no famine on the one hand or blizzards on the other from which some have been suffering so terribly. We may well prize the land we live in and do our best for it, for to few have the lines fallen in pleasanter places than to those who occupy this favoured Province.

It furnishes a truly marvellous illustration of self-control, of the educative effect of the working of free institutions, that, while only a month ago a whole vast country extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the great lakes on the north, and on the south to the Gulf of Mexico, embracing a population of over sixty millions, was in a wild turmoil of political excitement over issues that were believed to be so vital that the civilized

world looked on with interest and expectancy, they have settled down within a few days to a simple and absolute acceptance of the verdict of the majority, and quietly gone on their way attending to all their ordinary work as if nothing special had taken place. No mailed hand has been laid upon the people, no garrisoned forts are to be seen, the tramp of armies is not heard, nor boom of cannon, but only the exercise of simple, grand, if we may not call it sublime, national self-control. The struggle, everybody knows, was an education on the question of sound versus spurious money, but it has been, besides, an education in the practice of free, national self-government, more important in itself and more far reaching by a great deal in its results; and the keener the contest, the greater the stake, the better the lesson the nation has learned, and the brighter has the outlook been made for free government of the people by the people and for the people the world over and for all time.

It was to be expected that Dr. Watson would take with the American people, and he has done so. Our exchanges from the States have nothing but kind words to say of him and of his public appearances. He is compared with Irving, Paderewski, Lord Kelvin, Lord Russell, and many other distinguished men who, in America have mounted to the topmost round of popular admiration and favor. At Buffalo, a correspondent of the *Evangelist* tells us, "he found a city full of people in a mood well prepared to enjoy whatever he had to offer, and he touched off the traits of Scottish character with the hand of a master." Comparing him with some hypercritical English visitors to the States who didn't approve this, and didn't approve that, the same writer tells us, and he reflects fairly the general opinion, Ian Maclaren "was in every respect so appreciative, so gentle, so cordial, and sweet, and sympathetic, that he will always have a warm place in the hearts of those he met." No wonder Dr. Watson has been sending home to his people in Sefton Park, Liverpool, glowing accounts of America, and many things American, in which we are glad to see he includes Canada.

Trouble and a state of war have existed now for two years between Spain and her dependency, Cuba, and peace does not yet appear to be at hand. The United States, as being the nearest neighbor to Cuba, and having had a large trade with the island, and until the breaking out of war, a growing trade, is especially affected by and concerned in the struggle. From the first there has been a certain element among the people in the States, of the filibuster kind, which has sympathized with the Cubans in their struggle for liberty and independence. This sympathy has, however, been gradually but steadily growing, and what attitude the Government should assume towards Spain and Cuba in the circumstances is becoming a question in practical politics. It is not likely, unless some unexpected turn of affairs should take place shortly, that the present administration will commit itself to anything very decided. If the Cubans hold out until the new Government comes into power, it is not improbable that some definite step may be taken in recognition of Cuba's claims to independence, which, should it be obtained, would in all likelihood mean ultimate annexation to the United States, in which relation the natural fertility and great resources of Cuba would undoubtedly be very rapidly developed.

PULPIT, PRESS AND PLATFORM.

Hamilton Spectator: The sort of statesmanship which would again make the Conservatives the champions of coercion is beyond understanding.

United Presbyterian: It is difficult to read the words of some of the prophets without thinking of the present day; we should not try to do so. These words are living words to living men.

Montreal Witness: If only all those who have perished from the way among any man's own acquaintance and the companions of his youth could be arrayed before him, with their disgraces upon them, no man among us could be other than a total abstainer and a prohibitionist.

Montreal Witness: The Archbishop of Halifax and the Archbishop of St. Boniface are dissenters from the general approval of the happy settlement of the Manitoba school question, which has been achieved by the substitution of friendly negotiations for threats that could never have been put in force.

Hon. G. W. Ross: I have spent ten of the best years of my life in the school-room, with what result it is hard to say. I have spent twelve or thirteen years directing the teachers of this country, with most gratifying feelings of pleasure, happy many a time, sometimes with considerable fear lest I was not at all times doing the right thing.

Alfred Baker, M.A.: I believe that in no department of human activity are conventions more necessary than in the teaching profession. Fresh advances in science are constantly being made; fresh groupings and generalizations are offered; new lights are thrown on old facts. In the science of education novel theories are being put forward, and in the art of education novel methods are being introduced.

Scottish American: Among the many reforms reported as having been agreed to by the Sultan for the internal government of Turkey, none seems more feasible or desirable than that which would place its financial affairs under the control of European Ministers. The proposal, indeed, seems too good to be true. With a tight hold of the purse strings the Great Powers could accomplish almost any desired reform in Turkey.

James Doyle: "Sorrows come to save us from sorrow." It is not good for any of us to have a "soft time," and no difficulties to overcome. The parasitic person who lives upon others finds that his powers of self-help gradually disappear. "The mark of rank in nature," it has been said, "is a capacity for pain," and generally it is the experience of toil and trouble and actual pain that brings out whatever excellence a man possesses.

Interior: The attitude of theology has been one of suspicion, and at times of direct hostility to scientific discovery and thought. But science and the philosophies which have sought to generalize scientific truths are found to correlate Calvinism so fully and particularly that the terms are synonymous; and the foundation of science as the foundation of Calvinism is mainly the persistent, irrevocable, and immutable operation of law.