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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1887.

THE religious denominations of Canada should be grateful to the Press for the manner in which the proceedings of their supreme courts are reported. During the recent meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States, a leading New York journal gave *seven lines* to the Assembly and *two columns* to a prize fight. The leading journals of Canada would probably give the same amount of space to the prize fight, but they would put a good report of the Assembly beside it as a sort of antidote to the poison. At the present time, a good Methodist who reads the reports of the Conference at Hamilton may know quite as much about the business as those who are present—perhaps more. Ministers and others who read a good report of our General Assembly proceedings in the quiet of their homes often have a better idea of what was done than some who were out and in during the meeting. Church-going people don't know how much they owe the Press for informing the people about our Church work.

A SHORT time ago a New Jersey minister gave up what was said to be a flourishing congregation, and devoted himself to the masses in New York. The numerous class who pine for a thrust at the "regular clergy" raised a good-sized cackle over such alleged devotion. Not that they cared anything for the masses, but because they wished to have a fling at ministers. It is said that the gentleman in question is now considering a call, and is likely to go back to regular work. 'Twas ever thus. When any kind of clerical "crank" goes off at a tangent, there is a class in the community who always try to manufacture a little capital against the regular ministry out of his escapades. Let some ill-balanced, weak-minded, notoriety-loving creature announce that in future he does not mean to take any stipend, but is going to "trust to the Lord," and forthwith an avalanche of abuse will be hurled against every minister in the neighbourhood by men most of whom don't believe in preaching at all, or in the Lord either. It never occurs to these people that the average life of a "crank" is but a few weeks, and that he always stops nearly as soon as the stipend.

REFERRING to the number of vacancies in the Presbyterian Church, a St. John contemporary says:

"There are now vacant St. Andrew's Church, Ottawa; St. Andrew's, St. John's, and St. David's Churches in St. John, N.B.; St. Andrew's Church in Halifax; St. Paul's and St. Joseph's Churches in Montreal—all leading churches in their respective localities—and we don't know how many more. And all find thus far the greatest difficulty in getting new pastors. Is the standard of excellence which the vacant congregations have set up quite too high? Or is the Presbyterian pulpit degenerating? Or are there internal difficulties in these churches which prevent their agreeing on a man?"

The Presbyterian pulpit is not degenerating. The average never was as high as at present. It does not by any means follow that because a congregation is long vacant its "standard of excellence" is quite too high. When the "new man" who has been settled at the end of a long vacancy appears on the platform or in the church courts side by side with his brethren, he generally succeeds in proving beyond a doubt that his congregation was not guilty of any such offence as having "too high" a standard. Perhaps the principal reason why many congregations are long vacant is because they hanker for "the distant, the unknown, or the half known." We venture to predict that most of the above congregations will call a minister from the States or the old country. We predict further that when the great "unknown" are here a year or two, they can't be distinguished in point of ability from scores of our own men—unless it be by having less of it.

ONE of the ways in which so-called evangelists of a certain class try to poison the minds of the people against the ministry is by constantly harping on the fact that ministers are paid. Ministers *should* be paid. Scripture and common sense say they *should*. A so-called evangelist who gives his services for nothing should know what such services are worth. Perhaps *nothing* is the correct figure. But do these so-called evangelists work for nothing? We challenge contradiction when we assert that the very men who abuse ministers for taking stipends will take all the money they can get. We say further, that they always *have* done so in this part of the world. Further, we allege that in many instances they have taken more money in proportion to the value of the services rendered than any of the resident ministers against whom they railed. The only difference is this: the minister takes his stipend openly and above-board, while the so-called evangelist takes his in the form of a present, or in some sneaking, underhand way. Sometimes he gets a pretty fat thing on his first visit if he has disturbed or broken up a congregation or two, but on his second or third visit the sum gets beautifully less. We heard of a case not long ago in which a gentleman who had helped to break up a large congregation saw his receipts come down from hundreds to the "tens," and it didn't take long to come down either. He took the small sum, however, as willingly as the large, and most likely went somewhere else to rail against the "hiring clergy!"

## LITERARY AND THEOLOGICAL TRAINING.

THE General Conference of the Methodist Church, now sitting in Hamilton, has many subjects brought under notice identical with those which engage the attention of our General Assembly from year to year. Among these is a proposal, in a report on education, requiring all candidates for the ministry to obtain a degree in arts before beginning the study of theology. The animated and earnest discussion which the proposal evoked shows unmistakably that, however desirable such a requirement may be, the Methodist Church is not prepared at once to adopt it, and it may even be questioned whether, on general principles, that Church would approve of any such restriction. To adopt the proposal would certainly be a very wide departure from the practice under which, for the last hundred years, "the people called Methodists" have been signally owned of God, and have grown to be, in some respects, the foremost Protestant denomination in Anglo-Saxondom, if we may be allowed the use of that term. We may safely leave this matter for settlement to a Church so characterized by practical wisdom; and the decision they come to will be worthy of notice by other Churches, and in particular by the Presbyterian Churches.

In our Canadian Presbyterian Church, as in the Home Churches, it has long been one avowed object to secure for as many of our ministers as possible a thorough university training. For long in this country this could not be done. But now, with the facilities afforded by the colleges in Halifax, Fredericton, Quebec, Montreal, St. Francis, Kingston, Toronto, Winnipeg, along with abundant High Schools, a degree in arts seems to be within the reach of candidates for the ministry generally. Scholarships in our colleges, enjoyed by university students who intend the ministry, have been established chiefly to secure a full course for young men who might, without that assistance, have been unable to attend the classes; and the Church is much indebted to Rev. Dr. King, of Toronto, and others who laboured so earnestly in this cause, as well as to the gentlemen and congregations whose liberality has provided the means. It is to be hoped that not less, but more, will be done in the future in this direction. And it is encouraging to note that every year an increasingly large proportion of all those who begin the study of theology have obtained a degree in arts.

At the same time, a preparatory course has been hitherto found to be almost a necessity in our theological colleges. Queen's University does not seem to regard it as indispensable; but in the other theological colleges the training needed for students who, when they come up to study, cannot matriculate for university classes, has been provided by tutors. Again and again has a majority of the Supreme Court voted that the preparatory department should be abolished; but it still survives—it cannot be voted

out. For this "survival of the fittest" there must be a reason; and in the discussion in the Methodist Conference more than one speaker, both clerical and lay, referred to the reason. It is a valid, deep-lying reason, which appeals to Christian instinct, and which a living Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, can never ignore. We may think the best way to obtain ministers is to have boys devoted to the office in early life, and educated in school and college with a view to the work; so that about the age of eighteen or twenty they will be able to enter on the study of theology well equipped. The Church has cause to thank her Head that many such have come forward, and that not a few of the leading ministers in the Presbyterian Churches are sons of pious parents, who counted it a privilege to expend money on educating their sons for the ministry, even when to do so required no little self-sacrifice. This may, in our opinion, be the best way of getting ministers. But experience shows that no thriving Missionary Church—nay, not even the wealthy Church of England, with its rich benefices—can find a sufficient number of men for the Lord's work thus fully furnished. Besides, He whose prerogative it is to *call* men to be teachers and ministers in His Church, is always calling men of a very different stamp. Poor men, comparatively illiterate, not young, have been fired with the holy ambition of preaching the Gospel. And when a Church has refused to employ them, these men have nevertheless insisted upon exercising their gifts, and have done so with acceptance and profit to the Church of God. Now, when God has called such a man—a Sandy Paterson, a Moody, or some less noted, now occupying important places in the Church—what is to be done? Shall we insist upon such an one taking a full High School and University course, and refuse to ordain him unless he passes an examination in all the subjects of an arts curriculum? Where is our authority for so doing? The Christian people recognize the gifts of the Lord, and are prepared to call the man to the exercise of them, although he cannot pass in Mathematics, or Latin, or Chemistry, or some other obligatory branch of study. Dare the Presbytery or the Assembly come between and say, "This man has every qualification needed for the ministry, such as piety, prudence, natural gifts, knowledge of his Bible, of doctrinal truth, and of moral philosophy, but because he wants Latin or Mathematics, and cannot get a degree in arts, we may not ordain him?" Of course not; God's call must be honoured, degree or no degree. So it becomes the duty of the Church to take such men of advanced age and mature Christian experience, who possess suitable gifts, and give them just such training as is necessary to make them efficient evangelists and pastors. The Church can never allow herself to be bound so that she must reject or keep back unduly such men as are manifestly called of God. Universities were made for the Church, not the Church for universities. It is true the Church may err in admitting some who are imperfectly prepared, but in the long run the loss will be less than if she should err in casting out good men for want of a degree. It may be by-and-by that every minister will be a Master of Arts; the advance in general education may forbid the success of any man without such training; but the Church may not add to Christ's requirements, or insist upon anything that He has not commanded.

## THE WAR IN EGYPT.

PRACTICALLY, the war in Egypt is over. One wisely-planned and vigorously-fought-out battle has settled the whole thing, and now the British are masters of the situation, and can dictate their own terms. We are at once glad and thankful that such is the fact. The effusion of blood has been stopped, and there is every prospect of the condition of the people in Egypt being greatly improved. No doubt there are still great difficulties to be overcome. The other European powers, who have looked on with ill-disguised jealousy when England has been single-handed, carrying on the contest with Arabi, may be inclined to intervene in a very disagreeable fashion in reference to the final settlement of the matters originally in dispute, and of the permanent relationship which Britain has to sustain to the country and Government of Egypt. The possible complications that may in this way emerge are almost endless, and to a fertile imagination may be very formidable. We are inclined, however, to hope the best. It so