

this year. This work cost \$160,470, or \$72,527 more than the income, and an earnest effort is to be made to make up this deficit. Rev. Dr. Henry Van Dyke, was the chief spokesman at the meeting, over which Mr. John S. Kennedy presided.

CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS.

CHRISTMAS means to him who regards it as a church festival, the day on which was ushered into the world, the blessed Saviour and Redeemer. Nay, even if the day of Christ's birth cannot be exactly fixed, one day in the year he allots for a thankful, devout celebration of the event. To him the religious is the dominant idea, and the sweetest song of the sacred carols is that of the Evangel:

"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men."

And what higher or holier view can be taken of Christmas than that here set forth? Christmas with its religious associations ought to be helpful in deepening religious feeling, and in reminding anew of the everlasting love of God for man.

But the true Christian celebration of the Festival is not by any means confined to personal devotion and public worship. What is good, what is Christlike in man comes to the surface in various ways. The sunshine of God's grace will be diffused. Men and women, experiencing the love of Christ in their hearts will try to communicate it to others, and will be stimulated in doing so by the thoughts of the Christmas season. Mindful of God's goodness, the poor and needy will be remembered. Charity, the loveliest of the graces, is never more gracious than when sharing the bounties of Providence with those upon whom misfortune has cast a Christmas shadow. Good cheer in the mansion and good cheer in the lowly dwelling; that is the Christmas motto.

The courtesies of life are quickened at Christmas-time. In this way alone, were there no other, the advent of the happy season would be propitious. In this work-a-day world, what with rush and bustle, the poetry is being sapped out of life. Christmas joys, its sacred family memories, its social friendships, are a seasoning to life's care and canker. Long may it continue to be so, a buffer between the world and the mind. Christ's mission was to wean men from the world—from Worldliness; and homely pleasures are allies of spiritual joy. Then let the former be cultivated as well as the latter; and the joy, the sunshine of life—how can it be better preserved than by imparting of what we possess, as we can, to those not as fortunate as ourselves. When the Christmas Chimes are ringing forth their merry peals, let our bounty reach some fireside where without it Christmas would be cold and cheerless, but with its help, happy and contented.

THE PROHIBITION PLEBISCITE.

THE vice of intemperance no one will deny. The failure of law to check the evil is equally evident. Moral suasion has changed public ideas, and popular taste more than have the pains and penalties of the statute book, or the regulations of the license system. Yet moral suasion has failed to stamp out drunkenness and its train of evils, and reformers have come to the conclusion, almost unanimously, that the only effective remedy for one of the greatest curses of the age, is the prohibition by law of the manufacture, importation or sale of intoxicating or alcoholic liquors. A plank of the Liberal platform being to submit a Plebiscite to the people of the Dominion to ascertain the popular will, it is natural that public interest should be directed to so important a subject. The advocates of the Plebiscite have not been idle and their argument is fairly well known. The extremists on the other side—the liquor

interest—have not been idle, and their influence is being felt at Ottawa and elsewhere. But a great body of moderate opinion on the question exists in Canada one phase of which has been lately ventilated by the learned Principal of Queen's University, Rev. Dr. Grant, in a couple of articles contributed to the daily press. Principal Grant's view will be received with the consideration to which his patriotism, and keen sense of the public weal entitle them. Having taken sides he has challenged criticism, but having on the whole presented his case with moderation, and always with great skill, those who differ from him are left with little room for mere dialectics. Broad issues are raised, and a discussion, therefore, may ensue, which will be valuable in reaching intelligent as well as correct conclusions. Principal Grant's position is clear:

"For a Dominion, scattered over half a continent, to try it (*i.e.*, prohibition), especially with a boundary line of thousands of miles, on the other side of which it is lawful to import, manufacture and sell, is an experiment that one is tempted to term quixotic."

Again:—

"After long and earnest consideration I have come to the conclusion that a Dominion prohibitory law would be hurtful to the cause of temperance and most hurtful to general public and private morality. Believing this, it is surely my duty to go to the polls and to vote "No" to the question, "Are you in favor of prohibition?"

This frank confession will at once place Principal Grant at the head of the opposition to the proposed prohibition legislation, for none other with equal ability and leadership will be found battling for the *status quo*. And, indeed, anti-prohibitionists may well feel elated over such an avowal as Dr. Grant's from such a quarter.

Before referring to the reasons given by Principal Grant for his opinions we have to enter a protest against his assumption that ministers of the Gospel are not free agents in this prohibition campaign. His words are:

"Clergymen in active work are not free to take any side but one on this question, and therefore, silence on their part is legitimate. There is hardly one who has not in his congregation parishoners who have suffered, directly or indirectly, because of drunkenness, and to these, even a Scriptural argument against prohibition seems a plea for drunkenness or a refusal to put a stop to its ravages. When that comes from their own minister it seems to them like a blow from the sanctuary"

This is one of the weakest pieces of writing we can remember from Principal Grant, who seldom lacks in force and cogency. His plea will, however, mislead no one, so obviously does it carry its own condemnation. We shall be surprised, however, if the imputation it contains shall not be objected to by clergymen in active work," and the suggestion it conveys, by "parishoners who have suffered."

Principal Grant's reasons for the faith that is in him may be summoned up thus:

(1):—Canada is about all right as she is, or at least within her borders a "comparatively happy condition of things" exists. Yet "there is hardly one who has not in his congregation parishoners who have suffered, directly or indirectly, because of drunkenness."

(2):—Prohibition has been tried and has failed—as witness the Dunkin Act, the Scott Act, and the laws of Maine. The prohibitionists argue against this that Dominion prohibition would differ from, the county, Province, or State prohibition already tried, not only in area but in jurisdiction, the whole country being subject to one law, and again Principal Grant comes to their aid with the words. "So far as I know, the proposal