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The Churches feel the languor inseparable from the heated term. Those whose circumstances and duties detain them feel that they have to exercise patience and self-denial. The atmosphere is drowsy and the services somehow have not the life and freshness which at other seasons they possess. Numbers are greatly diminished, whole families are away, and the Church and Sabbath school have a deserted look. These somewhat depressing influences have induced Churches to close up during vacation and reasons in defence of this course are urged. It is difficult, however, to convince the average Christian that it is a proper thing to close the doors of the House of God, and leave the members who remain at home to wander at will in search of spiritual pasturage. No difficulty is experienced in securing supply for the pulpits rendered vacant by the departure of their regular occupants for the sea-side or Europe. Witness-bearing for the Truth is as much needed in summer as it is in winter, and it does not seem a right thing to have silent sanctuaries. That seems a better method, tried in some of our Canadian cities last summer with excellent results, where two neighbouring congregations arranged to meet together during the holiday season. It secures a husbanding of resources, brings the people into closer friendly relations with each other, and leaves a door open for all who choose to enter.

Those who go for a vacation carry their responsibilities with them. Many may feel a delight in the temporary freedom from the restraints of conventionality. They may not be disposed to follow out the social code in all its minute details and requirements, but if they are Christians at home they will be no less Christians away from home. Complaints sometimes come from remote summer resorts that those who are rigidly decorous at home are not so careful in their observance of the Sabbath while at distant watering places or in country villages. It is also said that they are not so punctual in their attendance on the means of grace as when at home. If these things are so, such complaints are well founded. It is not right that a careless example should be set before the people in remote places, neither is it right to be absent from the village Church, even although neither a Spurgeon nor a learned Doctor of Divinity occupies the pulpit, or a highly accomplished organist and a brilliant choir conduct the service of praise. The Christian life is itself a witnessing for Christ, and there is no place where that should be dispensed with, or where its influence for good is unfelt. Properly enjoyed, a vacation can be very helpful to moral and spiritual life. The quiet communing with nature, the absence of the turmoil and haste so characteristic of all modern life, sacred and secular, are conducive to the strengthening of right feeling. The temporary pause in the regular routine of customary life affords time for retrospect and reflection, exercises in which we are none too prone to indulge. It is well to be for a season cut loose from ordinary surroundings. A well-spent vacation will be good alike for body and soul.

THE PROHIBITION DEBATE.

It is the purpose of all organized effort for the advancement of the temperance cause to keep every aspect of it steadily in the public gaze. In addition to the regular agencies carrying on practical temperance work, the annual Assemblies, Synods, Conferences and Associations of the various Churches are approached. The subject is discussed and deliverances are framed. It is evident that from the character of these deliverances the sentiment in favour of total abstinence and the legal prohibition of the traffic in intoxicating liquors is steadily gaining ground. The Methodist Church has put itself on record as favouring prohibition, and our own Assembly has formally adopted a resolution in which the belief is expressed that the time has now come when popular opinion is sufficiently advanced to warrant the enactment of a prohibitory law.

This, however, is the point that is in dispute. All earnest believers in temperance are satisfied that the only effective method of removing intemperance is by cutting off the supplies altogether. There is considerable doubt, however, whether the public sentiment would support so radical a measure at the present time. The threatened interests in which so much capital is invested are determinedly opposed to any change. They are forces that have to be reckoned with. It is certain that, judging from past experience, they will employ every resource to retard the prohibition movement. There is also much indifference, that has hitherto been on the side of things as they are, and if it is

to be detached from the direction in which it has been going, must be aroused from its passive condition and enlisted on the side of temperance reform. The experiments in local option have not been conclusive. Many regard them whether justly or unjustly as practical failures. In their operation political influences have interfered. The Scott Act wherever it was tried did good work. Its friends claim for it a large measure of success, its opponents were as certain that its effect was demoralizing. It seems clear, however, that wherever it was faithfully carried out the results were all that its friends could desire. One reason why it was discredited is to be found in the imperfect manner in which its provisions in many places were carried out. In some cases its administration was placed in hostile hands, and infractions of the law were winked at, and in these cases law and order were brought into disrepute. The comparative failure of the Scott Act, resulting in its general repeal in communities that had adopted it, has strengthened the movement in favour of prohibition. The earnest temperance sentiment of the community cannot rest satisfied with a do-nothing policy. If one measure for the suppression of the evils of intemperance will not work then others must be tried. Prohibition, radical though it be, is the logical outcome of temperance principles. The tide is setting in strongly in that direction. Hence the repeated deliverances of the respective Churches, and the advance movement of the temperance organizations.

Last week the deferred debate on the prohibition resolution was resumed and disposed of in the House of Commons. The resolution, proposed by Mr. Jamieson, reads, "That in the opinion of this House the time has arrived when it is expedient to prohibit the manufacture, importation and sale of intoxicating liquors for beverage purposes." That was the square issue presented to the members. There is a disposition to evade it, and two amendments were proposed. One of them, somewhat vague and indefinite, was to submit the question to the popular vote; the other was for the appointment of a royal commission to enquire into the whole subject. Although the proposal for a plebiscite met with but little support when the vote was taken, several of those who took part in the debate expressed themselves in favour of that method of gauging public opinion. If the question had been so submitted it would have afforded a clear indication of the general sentiment, and had it been favourable to prohibition would have paved the way for legislation. The parliamentary representatives would by this means have received a mandate direct from their constituents which they could not have ventured to disregard. Had the decision been adverse it would have shown the need of further educational effort, and means would have been devised for rousing the popular conscience to see that some effective cure for the demoralizing effects of intemperance are imperative. In itself the direct appeal to the people would have had an immediate educational influence. It would have brought the question home to them and helped them to feel their individual responsibility. There is not much force in the objection urged by some that a plebiscite is unconstitutional. The Minister of Finance has once more illustrated the fact that a member in opposition may have clearer views on a given subject than he has when invested with the responsibilities of office. At all events the gentleman who years ago declared for immediate prohibition moved that instead of affirming that principle now the following should be the deliverance of the House:—

That in the opinion of this House it is desirable without delay to obtain for the information and consideration of Parliament, by means of a Royal Commission, the fullest and most reliable data possible respecting:—

1. The effects of the liquor traffic upon all interests affected by it in Canada.
2. The measures which have been adopted in this and other countries, with a view to lessen, regulate or prohibit the traffic.
3. The results of these measures in each case.
4. The effect of the enactment of a prohibitory liquor law in Canada would have in respect of social conditions, agricultural, business, industrial and commercial interest, of the revenue requirements of municipalities, provinces and the Dominion, and, also, as to its capability of efficient enforcement.
5. All other information bearing on the question of prohibition.

This by a vote of 107 to 88 became the decision of Parliament. The difficult question is thus got rid of for the time being. The commission will not be without its uses. Public attention will be drawn to its investigations and important facts will be elicited. It will help forward the temperance cause and possibly show that prohibition has come within the range of practical politics.

Books and Magazines.

THE CANADA EDUCATIONAL MONTHLY. (Toronto: The Canada Educational Monthly Publishing Co.)—As a sign that vacation is near this magazine has reverted to the doubling-up process followed during the holidays. We have the June and July numbers in one. Mr. Robertson, LL.B., of St. Catharines, discusses in thoughtful and lucid style "The Teacher's Relation to the State," and Mr. Hagarty says a good word for the study of "Classics in the High School." There are several other papers of practical importance, and the usual departments so useful to all interested in the work of education.

KNOX COLLEGE MONTHLY. (Toronto: D. T. McAlinsh.)—"The Prophet Hosea," by the late Professor Elmslie, forms the opening paper of the latest issue of this vigorous magazine. The paper is suggestive and will be read with interest. Dr. Middlemiss follows up his recent paper by another on "Inspiration and Illumination," marked by the thoughtfulness, candour and reverence of the earnest truth-seeker. In the present paper he deals with some of the difficulties that beset the question of inspiration. Rev. Mr. Rae, of Acton, has a brief paper on "Organized Sabbath School Work." "Impressions of the American Assembly" are vivid and afford racy reading.

THE METHODIST MAGAZINE. (Toronto: William Briggs.)—The opening paper in the June number is a condensation from the recently-published work of Emily de Laskowska-Gerald, "The Land Beyond the Forest," pictures of Transylvania. The interesting paper is finely and copiously illustrated. The editor apparently gives his finishing touches to the interesting and informing series of papers, "Canadian Tourist Party in Europe." He conducts his travelling companions in this sketch from Heidelberg to Harwich, where they begin to scatter. This paper, like all its predecessors, is lavishly illustrated. Among other contributions to the number requiring favourable mention are "Mackay of Uganda," "Over the Cottian Alps," "The Empire of the Spade," and a strong sonnet on "Cromwell," by the editor.

THE LAWS OF BUSINESS. With Forms of Common, Legal and Business Documents. By C. A. Fleming, Principal of the Northern Business College. (Owen Sound: C. A. Fleming.)—The design and usefulness of this carefully-prepared and concise manual will be best learned from the introductory paragraph of the preface. It is as follows: In the compilation of the following pages the writer has endeavoured to present to the reader in a concise and practical manner the leading principles of law as it relates to business, avoiding as much as possible the technical terms with which the subject is usually invested. The primary idea in writing this work was to supply students in business colleges, collegiate institutes and high schools, with a suitable text-book on the important subject of commercial law, and to place in their hands the forms of legal commercial papers more generally used by business men in their daily transactions. It will be found a useful book of reference for business men, farmers, mechanics and others, both as to the laws of trade and in furnishing suitable legal forms and directions for drawing the same in almost any case that may arise.

TEN YEARS IN MY FIRST CHARGE. By Rev. Alexander Hugh Scott, M.A. (Toronto: Hart & Co.)—This handsomely got-up volume opens with a comprehensive dedication, which is followed by another page rather unique in its contents. Not every one venturing on the uncertain sea of authorship finds such an auspicious start as has been accorded to the pastor of St. Andrew's Church, Perth. A worthy elder of his, ascertaining the scope and purpose of the work then about completed, provided the wherewithal to defray the expense of publication. The work is readable. Much in it is interesting, all of it is pervaded by a devoted spirit that in itself is a revelation of the purpose that animates the ministry of Mr. Scott. On the score of good taste some may possibly think that one or two of the complimentary addresses might, without injury to the book, have been omitted. There is much that will be helpful in the way of counsel and guidance to those who are beginning their ministerial career. It is more, however, than a guide for pastors. The people can learn from it much that will be helpful to them in their spiritual life, and be of assistance to them in their Christian and congregational work. The book contains twelve chapters, in which the author recounts the important experiences in his life and work. Many reflections and suggestions fitly belonging to these are embodied in its pages. It is hoped that the work will prove a blessing to many readers and realize the most sanguine expectations of its author.

PEOPLE'S COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN. Containing the Common Version, 1611, and the Revised Version, 1881 (American Readings and Renderings), with Critical, Exegetical and Applicative Notes. By Edwin W. Rice, D.D. With maps and original engravings. (Philadelphia: The American Sunday School Union.)—This is a complete Commentary on the Gospel according to John. It is the only one issued at a moderate price in which the comments are based upon both the Common and Revised Versions. The plan is similar to that adopted in three volumes on the earlier Gospels, and which have been received with marked favour by pastors, biblical students and Sabbath school workers. Some of the special features are: The explanations are based upon the Common, the Revised and the Greek texts; the latest modern criticism is noted, and its best results given; the various theories respecting the authorship of the Fourth Gospel are concisely stated in a scholarly introduction; the important differences and resemblances of the Fourth to the earlier three Gospels are clearly presented; upon difficult passages the views of the ablest biblical scholars of this and previous centuries are given, often in their own words; the engravings are from original and trustworthy sources, as the "Palestine Fund" by special permission, sketches and photographs by Good, Bonfils and Bell. The map is by permission from the latest (1890) by the Palestine Fund, and special notes on topics of unusual interest are given. The book is the result of years of study, and we believe it will be found even to surpass the previous volumes, which eminent scholars and critics have so strongly commended.