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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 1885.

WOULD some of these good people who think it would be a cure for alleged grievances to have more business done by the Assembly and less by Committees rise and explain the precise effect of the Assembly's deliverance on the College of Moderators? Is the College abolished? Are Presbyteries still at liberty to make nominations? How does the question stand anyway? The deliverance simply says that the Assembly shall appoint its Moderator at the usual time, by open vote like any other body. But is there anything to hinder the college from making nominations? Whatever the deliverance was intended to be the Assembly evidently thought it settled the question until they took second thoughts. Now when did any of the much abused committees come to a finding more disappointing than this finding of the full court?

RIEL'S counsel have staked their whole case on the plea of insanity. They have put their eggs all in one basket with what result remains to be seen. Of course the medical specialists will have their say and no doubt they will, as usual, differ. If any of them hold a matter of theory that all men are more or less insane, they, of course, will swear that Riel is insane. We are not aware that any of our present asylum superintendents hold this theory, or at all events state it so broadly as Dr. Workman was wont to state it. And after all the theory is no doubt correct. There is no such thing as absolutely perfect bodily health and why should we expect absolutely perfect mental health. Supposing it be admitted that a man is partially insane that may not affect his responsibility. There are just two points to be settled when the insanity plea is raised: Did the prisoner know what he was doing and did he know it was wrong? Did Riel know what he was doing when he raised this insurrection and did he know it was wrong? If these questions can be answered in the affirmative the fact that he was in a Quebec asylum does not affect the case. This much at least is clear, if Riel is insane he had enough method in his madness to have left the country for a few thousand dollars.

THE inquiry that is being made into the management and discipline of the Central Prison is likely to bring up for discussion the whole question of the treatment of prisoners. If it does not it should. So far as the merits of the case are concerned we make no comments; but it is very clear from evidence already put in that these Central Prison gentry expect rather high class board. Besides almost any building in course of erection, on the line of any new railway, you may see at the dinner hour honest toilers sitting beside their work and taking a meal that the Central gentlemen would turn up their noses at with scorn. If these honest labourers would but commit a crime they might rise to the dignity of convicts in the Central Prison and enjoy the privilege of having a commissioner enquire into the quality of their board. It is notorious that the inmates of the Central Prison and penitentiary fare very much better than many honest labouring men. If these ruffians are to be treated as a select class, a kind of convict aristocracy, the people should know it.

The day may yet come when a convict will have somebody to fan him in hot weather as he drinks lemonade at the expense of the country. As matters now stand he is better housed, better clad and better fed than many honest labouring men. Very few men of any class in this country can have investigations by Government when their dinners do not please them.

It should be borne in mind that Archdeacon Farrar, Neal Dow, the Hon. Alex. Vidal, and total abstinents of lesser note are not the only persons who have condemned the liquor traffic in the strongest terms. In fact the severest and most sweeping condemnation has often come from men who are not themselves total abstinents. Gladstone is not a total abstainer, but he declares that the liquor traffic has inflicted more injury on man "than the three great historic scourges, war, pestilence and famine, combined." Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, certainly no total abstainer or prohibitionist, said lately: "If we could make England sober we would shut up nine tenths of her prisons." Chief Justice Davis, of the United States, declares that the traffic is responsible for eighty per cent. of the crime of that country. The New York Tribune, no prohibitionist organ, says: "This traffic lies at the centre of all political and social mischief, it paralyzes energies in every direction, it neutralizes educational agencies, it silences the voice of religion, it baffles penal reform, it obstructs political reform." The London Times describes it as an evil of such vast and growing magnitude that "it may crush and ruin us all." Let anybody read the above expressions of opinion and say whether opposition to the traffic is confined to professional lecturers, clergymen and women. The opinions of such men as Gladstone, Chief Justice Coleridge, Chief Justice Davis, and such journals as the Tribune and Thunderer ought to be worth almost as much as the opinion of our Senate.

THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO WORKING PEOPLE.

WHAT the right mutual relations of the Church are to those who earn their living by ill-remunerated toil can easily be learned from the entire tenor of the New Testament. The Saviour belonged to no class. He was the Son of Man. It is the great object of the religion He taught to promote the brotherhood of humanity. His Apostles after Him taught the same truth. The religion they proclaimed breathed an all-embracing charity. The prevalence of the spirit of worldliness was always most clearly defined when the distinctions of rank were fawningly recognized by ambitious ecclesiastics. Men who best exemplified the spirit of Christ had the fullest sympathy and tenderness for the poor, the destitute and the down-trodden. The best forms of Christian philanthropy owe their origin to the Christ-like love of humanity which the professors of the Christian faith have conspicuously exemplified. Howard and Wilberforce, Chalmers and Blaikie, Shaftesbury and Gordon, were men who delighted in lightening the burdens of the lowliest, and counted it a high honour to be helpful to the humblest of their brethren, and to bring them under the benign sway of the Gospel of peace.

Nor need it be assumed that these are exceptional instances. Many Christian ministers and lay workers are animated by the same spirit. There are thousands with no morbid craving for notoriety who are ungrudgingly devoting their energies in obscure fields of Christian usefulness, seeking to succour the distressed and to bring to them the blessings of the Gospel. Notwithstanding Christian effort, the breach between the Church and working men is perceptibly widening. In large centres of population this is more apparent than in the case in smaller towns and villages and in country districts in Canada. Still, observant people cannot help seeing that among ourselves the evils complained of are not diminishing, and some are giving serious attention to the problem, an eminently practical one: How are better relations between the Church and working men to be promoted?

Dr. Washington Gladden has for some time been giving himself to the consideration of the question, and for this important work he possesses several valuable qualifications. He approaches the subject in the right spirit. There are good men who have no tolerance for others unless they walk in precisely the same footprints with themselves. Their first impulse is not calmly and honestly to look divergence of opinion straight in the face and try to ascertain why it exists.

The word of denunciation or astonishment readily rises for utterance, and the estrangement is more complete. Dr. Gladden does not follow this method; but with a clear recognition of the fact, in the spirit of a Christian philosopher, he seeks to ascertain the causes of alienation, and if possible to devise means for its removal. He possesses another eminent qualification for the work he has undertaken. There is an evident sincerity in his endeavour. No effort, more or less covert, to set class against class, nothing of the spirit and method of the demagogue to make capital out of social inequalities, is discernible in Dr. Gladden's irenic undertakings.

In order to ascertain directly the feelings and attitude of the toilers to the Church he has entered into extensive correspondence with workmen themselves, and in the latest number of the *Independent* he gives the tenor of the many letters he has received. He says:

Sixty letters from representative working-men in this country presented strong testimony to the increase of church neglect on the part of the people of their class. This was the well-nigh unanimous opinion of my correspondents, and it was strongly supported by the figures which some of them furnished.

Many of the reasons given for absence from church are, he says, neither cogent nor profound. They are excuses rather than reasons, and rather flimsy excuses at that. They are protests behind which the real causes are concealed. He is of opinion that, such as they are, they ought to be heard and considered. Their very flimsiness, he remarks, is phenomenal. Among excuses offered is this, it costs too much to support the churches. One correspondent objects to go to church because ministers sometimes preach politics. A number give as a reason that they need rest and refreshment. In summer they prefer to visit the beer gardens and go on excursions; while in winter they like best to stay at home and read. A more general excuse is found in the fact that many working people find difficulty in making ends meet, and, if the family is at all large, they cannot afford to dress as they desire, and the contrast between them and their more prosperous fellow-worshippers grates upon their feelings. One man says that the feeling of being snubbed by well-to-do church-goers has much to do in repelling people from public worship.

Dr. Gladden is inclined to trace to its origin the real cause of this alienation from church attendance on the part of working men. He assigns it to the present conflict between capital and labour and the strained relations between employer and employed. As an instance he quotes the saying of a "tired-looking shop-girl" who, when asked why she did not go to church, answered: "My employer goes. He is one of the pillars of the church. That's reason enough why I shouldn't go. I know how he treats his help. To this heads: This shop-girl's answer condenses into four short stinging sentences the substance of many of my letters.

In all this it is evident that this large and growing class of absentees from the sanctuary fail to see that the fault lies partially with themselves. There is no use in mincing matters. The unhappy state of things prevailing in many churches does not justify withdrawing from attendance on public worship. Working people, like others, are not free from the obligation to attend. It may be also that they are too sensitive in the matter of social distinctions, and lacking in the spirit of self-reliance which in other respects and on other occasions they are careful to maintain. When all is said, however, it ought to be taken into serious consideration whether those who go to church are manifesting the proper spirit towards their less favoured brethren. Is it absolutely necessary to dress in the most expensive and showy habiliments, and by that means to accentuate the inequalities of social life? As the artisan and his family properly wish to appear in their most becoming and neat attire, so those whose means are more ample might dress with greater plainness and less display than is too commonly the case at present.

But the cultivation and exemplification of the spirit of brotherly kindness in the Church and in all the relations of life would go far to remove one of the formidable barriers that keep thousands of toilers outside the Christian Church.

He who comes up to his own idea of greatness must always have had a very low standard of it in his own mind.—*Ruskin*.