

THE  
CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

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INDIVIDUALISM.

MR. GLADSTONE—in a recent article—speaks against making so much of the individual as is seen in non-conforming circles. Such a policy, he says, tends to render cohesion less durable, develops a remarkable want of permanence, generates a licentious use of power, and places its advocates at a disadvantage in competing with more highly-organized systems. Such a statement is a public arraignment of our fundamental principle of church-polity, which rates the individual as the unit of power in the church, and which is absolutely opposed to Romanism which makes the system everything, and the individual nothing.

From one point of view, we are greatly surprised to find such a charge proceeding from Mr. Gladstone. What are his views politically? He is against any and every concentration of power in any person or persons which might tend to limit individual rights. His doctrine in politics is that the individual should be accounted the unit of power in the State. The franchise is not wide enough for him, and he is working to extend it far beyond its present limits. He is one of the strongest advocates of individualism in the State. Now unless he can prove to us that men are not so well able to judge concerning the government of the Church as they are to judge concerning the government of the State, we shall fail to see his consistency in maintaining individualism so strenuously in the one case, and inveighing against it in the other.

From another point of view, we are not so surprised at his remarks. Mr. Gladstone is a High Churchman, an apologist for the Tractarian movement, a pronounced disciple of Dr. Pusey. And having thus been nursed amid the arrogant claims of sacerdotalism, it occasions no great surprise that he should favour ecclesiastically the absorption of power by the few rather than its distribution among the many. It is quite possible that High Church assumptions might throw a haze over even his naturally clear mind, by which the facts of the case might be obscured.

The court of history is the only one into which the rival merits of individualism or oligarchy can be taken. And we are quite willing to abide by its investigations and decisions. We are not afraid to compare Non-conformity with Anglicanism as to cohesion, although in one case it is a cohesion of love, while in the other it is a cohesion of rule and law. Nor would we fear the comparison as to permanence, for to our mind, we should have the advantage. Nor would we be loth to see the comparison made on the basis of the judicious use of power. For in the great

test, we are confident that the State Church of England—honey-combed as it is with unbelief and divided up into bitterest factions—would not be able to bear away the palm for either permanence, cohesion, or the prudent use of authority, from the children of Non-conformity. It seems to us that it would puzzle even Mr. Gladstone to prove from history that individualism has ever produced so much of disunion, arrogance, and dogmatism as can be found at an hour's notice in the Church with which he has the honour of being connected.

Correspondence.

MANITOBA AND THE NORTH-WEST.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

DEAR SIR, Since writing you last Mr. Ewing and I have been hard at work, in this far away Province. Our evangelistic meetings have increased steadily both in numbers and interest, and we have not been without indications of the Holy Spirit's presence and power in convincing some of sin, and in leading others to Christ.

We held several open-air meetings, which were largely attended, and the first of their kind ever held in the city of Winnipeg except at the Government sheds. A number of young men were thus reached, who were not in the habit of attending any place of worship. It was necessary to postpone these meetings for a week as we had arranged to go to the country on a missionary tour.

Having secured a horse and buckboard, and necessary supplies so as to camp out if need be, we started on Monday, the 11th of August. Even quite near to the city we passed through a *coolie* filled with water and mud to the depth of two or three feet. Passing on for a number of miles we came to the first house close to the trail, where, according to our custom, we had a little meeting with the family, leaving tracts and papers. We had our first dinner on the prairie. The afternoon turned out very wet, and for a time we took shelter in the cabin of a young man, who "is batching," as is often done in this new country where ladies are so scarce. Continuing our journey in the rain, we passed through about a mile of a swamp, growing with tall grasses and reeds, which were much higher than the horse, especially when he sank in the water and mud. But by the help of kind providence, a good horse, and a careful driver (*ego*) we got safely through. This brought us to Rockwood Penitentiary, where we received a warm welcome from the Deputy-Warden, Captain Armstrong, and his kind wife, who are Congregationalists. The building is very handsome, has been constructed partly of stone found in the vicinity, and partly of brick manufactured on the place. It was instituted in 1871 at the Old Stone Fort on the Red River, 20 miles to the north of Winnipeg. The new, 15 miles north of the city, was built at a cost of \$160,000, is beautifully situated on Stony Mountain, and can accommodate 60 inmates. The present number is 36—20 being convicts, and 16 lunatics.

The officers are dressed in military attire, and every thing appears to be conducted with military precision. The view from the top of the building is truly magnificent.

Mr. Macalister, of Kingston, who lives near the Penitentiary, took us over his fine farm and showed us his thoroughbred stock. He is a very enthusiastic farmer, and is much taken up with the country. After leaving him, we had to drive through an *alkaline* swamp, several times we were afraid horse, buckboard, missionaries and all would go down out of sight; however, it was safely passed.

The country was more thickly settled, and more suited to our work in the direction of Stonewall, where we put up, taking tea with Rev. Mr. Dyer (Methodist), a college friend of Mr. Ewing's. Stonewall is well situated on an elevated plain, having Methodist and

Baptist churches. Several miles farther on we spent the night at Mr. Fraser's hospitable home, where we had an interesting little meeting with the family and friends.

Some of the crops in this district are drowned out in consequence of the unusually wet season, yet, the farmers are hopeful, and we met with none who were dissatisfied with their new homes. Continuing our journey we passed through a beautiful prairie township of excellent land, having but *one house*, but many *coolies* and *muskegs*.

Our next halt was made at Mr. John Reid's, Meadow Lee, where we received a hearty welcome, both he and Mrs. Reid intend uniting with the proposed church in Winnipeg. At their earnest request we consented to remain with them for the night and hold a meeting in the neighbourhood. Messengers were at once dispatched to announce the fact, and in the evening a nice meeting was gathered, where we had much joy in speaking for the Master.

Leaving here we set out by the north trail, through a sparsely settled but fine looking country, for Portage la Prairie, 35 miles distant. Approaching the lands of the Assiniboine, near High Bluff, we come to a well settled and magnificent country, with fields of waving grain extending as far as the eye can reach, in some places topping the fences, and giving promise of a rich and golden harvest, which had already begun.

Two villages of *wigwams* were passed on our way, at one of which we called. The women were busy preparing berries for *hemican* making, while "the lords of creation" were strolling around. They seemed pleased with our picture papers, and understood enough of civilized life to be good beggars. One gallant looking dark-skin, after salutations, wanted to know "where you two fellows come from," saying, "me Scotchman, no work, no money, no tobacco." With a mental reservation as to no work, we told him we were very like himself, taking it for granted that he was a Scotchman, although we could have sooner believed him had he claimed connection with the *few lost tribes*.

Before we is the rising town of Portage la Prairie. After viewing its environments, which give every inducement for building a beautiful city, we put up at the Lorne Hotel, and begin preparations for an open air meeting. The amount of drinking which was discovered in giving invitations to this meeting was appalling for so small a place. Many under the influence of liquor came to the meeting, which we held close to one of the worst drinking places in the town. Still there was much kindness shown even on the part of the poor fellows under the influence of drink, one offering to assist in the service of song, another wished to take up a collection, while a powerful looking half-breed by sundry demonstrations indicated his willingness to preach. These, perhaps, did much to gather a large crowd, but declining all such assistance, we proceeded upon our own responsibility, having upon the whole much attention, and an excellent opportunity of speaking words of sympathy and warning to many who appeared to be living careless, thoughtless lives.

The Portage is a rising place, situated in the midst of a fertile country on the great highway to the Saskatchewan and North-west Territory. Since June over thirty houses have been erected, and commercial interests are rapidly developing. There are three small church buildings, Presbyterian, Methodist and Episcopalian. The Baptists contemplate starting missionary operations here. In our opinion Congregationalists should make an effort in the same direction.

Sunday appointments obliged us to hurry away from the Portage and take the shortest trail for Winnipeg. Waggons drawn by oxen, heavily laden with furniture and supplies, were frequently met conveying hopeful settlers to their prospective homes in the North-west. They appeared cheerful and happy, and were glad to receive our papers and tracts. The drive was a beautiful one. The winding course of the Assiniboine is marked by a border of trees on the right, while on the left, most of the way, stretches an open prairie.