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## The Canada Presbyterian.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4th, 1891.

THE sad disaster at Springhill, N.S., has awakened a sympathetic interest throughout the Dominion. It is gratifying to know that prompt measures have been taken to secure immediate relief for the destitute and suffering victims of the dread calamity that overtook the miners so suddenly. The appeals made on their behalf are certain to receive an immediate and generous response.

IN the Presbyterian Church of the United States professors are appointed by the governing Boards of the seminaries. The appointment is then reported to the General Assembly and if the Assembly does not veto, the appointment is final and complete. It appears, however, that the transference of a professor from one chair to another is not reported to the Assembly and this shuts out the brethren who were expecting to have something to say about Dr. Briggs' inaugural. If they make any move now they must make it in a direct way as the authorities of Union Seminary are under no obligation to tell the Assembly anything about changing Dr. Briggs from one chair to another.

IN the Mexican Republic, Evangelical Christianity is making very encouraging progress. In the Presbyteries of the city of Mexico and Zacatecas there are ninety-seven churches, twenty-nine ordained ministers, and twenty-three young men who have nearly completed their studies who are engaged in preaching the Gospel. Already the Presbyterian Church can number 5,000 communicants. The Methodist Church in the United States has also extensive missions in Mexico and their efforts have met with a corresponding degree of success. With the inspiring influence of a pure Gospel and free institutions Mexico has a promising future.

THE *Interior* sums up the work of the Revision Committee in this way:—

All reports as to the committee's work agree in these particulars—that it has been conscientious and thorough, that the devotional meetings have been deeply interesting and promotive of cordial Christian fellowship, that the directions of the Assembly have been regarded scrupulously, that full consideration has been accorded to all the formal suggestions of the Presbyteries, and, finally and consequently, that no changes have been proposed which antagonize or impair the Calvinistic system of doctrine.

All of which is gratifying, though it must be rather disappointing to the fighting brethren who expected to make a reputation by contending for or against revision. It is specially gratifying to know that "the devotional meetings were deeply interesting and promotive of cordial Christian fellowship." If all ecclesiastical meetings had more of the devotional element, ecclesiastical problems might be much more easily solved. The revision of the Confession may not raise as much of the old Adam as the discussion of many a small question.

IT is a high time with our Methodist brethren throughout the world. This week celebrations of the Wesleyan centennial are being held everywhere. From the earnest and devoted ministry of John and Charles Wesley what wonderful results have come. In its infancy Methodism was everywhere spoken against, and its adherents were often shamefully treated. Patiently and perseveringly they did their work, and they are now a power for good wherever their Church is found. In all English-speaking countries they are helping to mould the religious life of the people. On this continent they are strong and influential. To them in Canada must be accorded the honour they deserve for the

admirable pioneer work they did when religious ordinances were scarce in remote settlements in early days. As a denomination they have grown with the growth of the country. Other denominations have been benefitted by their zealous example. Several of their distinguished men are indebted to Presbyterianism for their early training, and their Methodism has not suffered on that account. Presbyterians have only cordial well-wishes for them on this joyous occasion.

IT is a trite remark that the French are a volatile people. Illustrations of its truth appear from time to time. It is not long since the Boulanger bubble burst. Many entertained the idea that the Republic rested on a stable basis and that it was now stronger than ever. A proof of this was seen in the recent effort of Cardinal Lavigerie to induce the Pope to sanction a cessation of priestly opposition to the Republic. It was understood that the German Emperor was disposed to cultivate more friendly relations with France. In pursuance of such a policy, his mother, ex-Empress Frederick, visited Paris with a view to encourage French artists to participate in the coming fine art exhibition at Berlin. The visit of the ex-Empress has raised an unexpected tempest in Paris. At first several distinguished painters were favourable to the idea of taking part in the Berlin Exhibition, but they were frightened out of it by the commotion raised by a few agitators. French hospitality and politeness have been severely strained at the instigation of irresponsible fire-eaters. The old war spirit has been aroused, and Germans seemed disposed to resent the treatment meted out to their Kaiser's mother. It surely cannot be that a well-intentioned visit of a lady to the French capital can become a reason for war. If it does the force of folly can no further go.

A WRITER in the *Interior* says:—

The trouble with our American politics to-day is that the best men keep out of them. The prevalent indifference on the part of our ablest, most honest, high-minded citizens, to the preservation in their strictest integrity of our American institutions, and the maintenance of high standards in our popular form of government, is a shame and a reproach to American civilization. You will find the best men everywhere standing aloof from the public service. It is so even in local and provincial politics. The worthiest citizens pass by on the other side, while the demagogues lead their hired retinues to the caucus and their bribed rabble to the polls. It has come to the point that money everywhere buys political preferment. The statesman's robe is up at auction, and the doors of our legislative halls open only to keys of gold.

Over here everybody takes a hand except Plymouth Brethren and a few of the clergy. The women attend political meetings in large numbers and throw bouquets to their favourite orators. Our way is out of all sight the best. Canadians have not the slightest intention of handing over the government of this country to the "bribed rabble." Of course some rather tough citizens get to the front occasionally, but our "ablest, most honest, high-minded citizens" don't stand aloof by any means. In the Legislature of Ontario a large proportion of the members are prominent men in their respective Churches, and there is hardly a scalawag among them. If our neighbours hope to become annexed to this Canada of ours they must teach their best citizens to take part in the public service.

TWO clear days before polling day and without any special knowledge of the chances of either party we earnestly urge our readers to bow respectfully to the verdict of the people whatever that verdict may be. If the people decide to give the present Government a fresh lease of power let the will of the people be respected. If they decide to put the reins of government into the hands of the Liberal party let the new Government have a fair chance to carry out their policy. Whether this country can stand the N.P. any longer or whether it can stand Unrestricted Reciprocity at all are questions about which good citizens differ but there is one thing on which all sensible people are agreed and that one thing is that Canada cannot stand prolonged, bitter, political agitation. Let us have peace after Thursday evening. Spring is near and spring business should soon be opening. Honest men will have to work for their bread no matter which party wins, and the sooner they get peaceably to work the better for themselves and their country. Business, and we fear Church duties as well, have been sadly neglected by many during the

past few weeks. The Government is on trial now; the people will be on trial on Friday. Self-control and capacity for government is always shown by the readiness and good grace with which men bow to the verdict of the majority. The Parnellites and anti-Parnellites will keep up a scrimmage in Ireland as long as two of them are left, but we hope Canadians have a more excellent way. Let us have peace and let Christian people remember that behind all secondary causes there is a Supreme Ruler who controls the destiny of our nation.

THE *New York Evangelist* gives an entire page to an interview and two columns to an editorial on the burning question, "Can the Government help the farmers." Anticipating objections the *Evangelist* says:—

Does anybody ask, What has this to do with morals and religion, that such a subject should be made a topic of discussion in a religious newspaper? We answer that the connection is very close between the material condition of a community and its moral condition. The farmers of a whole state cannot be kept all the time on the ragged edge of poverty, without its telling on their families, to whom they can hardly give food to eat, or raiment to put on. Poverty means children ragged and barefooted, who cannot go to church and Sunday school, nor even to the day school; and that means that they grow up in ignorance, and in the sort of heathenism that we find creeping into the outlying districts of towns in New England, once famed for their schools, academies and colleges. Poverty does not by any means necessitate ignorance or immorality; but it does often lead to a scantiness and cheapness in one's mode of life, that is very apt to sink into a low, squalid existence; while on the other hand, being "well off" means decent clothes and wholesome food, good schools and churches, so that material comfort and independence are most important elements in Christian civilization.

Undoubtedly they are most important elements in Christian civilization and if poverty siezes the farming community the Churches will soon suffer. There is a world of truth in the following on the relative importance of occupations:—

Of all the varied occupations into which the nation is divided, the farmers are at once the most numerous, the most industrious, and the most productive. They contribute the most to the national wealth, because they are always at work. They are not drones in the hive of human industry, that live on the honey which others collect; they are producers, wringing out of the soil by their strong hands, the harvests that feed sixty-five millions of people. Hence it is not without reason that they claim, that if any class in the country is to receive the aid of the Government, it is they who till the earth, and cause it to bring forth food for the service of man; that if a tariff is to be framed for the special benefit of manufacturers, they too are entitled to an equal degree of protection. It is but just to say that this principle was recognized to some extent in the recent tariff, in which a duty was imposed on the products of the soil, as well as on the products of the foundry and the loom. But the relief thus afforded is very small.

The fact that a religious journal of pronounced Republican sympathies gives so much space to this question shows that it has come to stay at least until it is fully discussed. The discussion is going on in Canada at a lively rate.

## INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY.

THIS is an age of organization. If one undertakes to effect some reform or advance any cause, he must secure the assent and co-operation of others. Only thus can any movement achieve success. By combination common objects are accomplished. What was wont to be left to individual effort is now undertaken by corporations. To this principle of association we owe the existence of combines and trades unions. Political, social, moral and religious movements are all promoted by associated numbers. Yet it is to be remembered that all societies, all organized bodies are composed of individuals, all are separable into their original units. Association may be for good purposes or for evil. It is a power which could not be dispensed with even were it desirable. Co-operation is an agency that will extend rather than diminish in the future. Like all things else it may be abused, it has dangers that have to be guarded against.

Association absolves no one from individual responsibility. Individual rights may be pushed to injurious extremes, so also may those of organizations. It is proverbial that societies may do things that none of their members in their individual capacities would care to do. Corporations, it is said, have no souls. Whether exercised by individuals or by organizations there is always a temptation to abuse power and influence. There is, therefore, an inclination at times to do extreme things by associations because their members imagine they may evade consequences because of divided responsibility. It ought to be remembered that