

THE ST. THOMAS LESSON.

The recent financial collapse of two monetary institutions in St. Thomas has caused much serious reflection in several directions. The collapse in each case was caused by speculation. Speculation is not a thing to be commended, any more than other short cuts to wealth; but the practice is less culpable where a man of means chooses to risk his own money exclusively; but where a man employs, as if it were his own, the money of others, and particularly the stored savings of widows and orphans, the strongest condemnation is not too strong. One case at St. Thomas is particularly painful. The manager of a savings and loan company is shown to have taken in numerous sums of money, and used them in speculation, without entering the money in the books of the company to the credit of the depositors. The total amount of defalcation seems likely to be very large, with the result that many persons who thought they were safely putting something by for old age, or a rainy day, suddenly wake up to find themselves robbed. What makes the matter worse is the fact that the wrong-doer has been prominently and actively connected with a Christian congregation. No doubt he was trusted the more on that account. It is bad logic, of course, to hold the Christian Church responsible for the failures of men to live up to its teachings. But every such case wounds the cause of Christ, and is deeply to be regretted.

In the particular case to which we have reference, which has been in all the papers, it is quite possible, as has been suggested, the defaulting manager may have intended to go on speculating with other people's money only for a while, and, as soon as he had made enough to do so, restore the money improperly taken. He may have intended all this; but, unfortunately, "the road to hell is paved with good intentions." The lesson to any young man who may read these lines is the old and trite lesson of absolute financial honesty in things small as well as great, the folly of false beginnings, and the wisdom of, at any cost, putting a full stop, at once and forever, to all practices that savor of crookedness.

Those who know something of the history of the defaulter in the case in question believe he took the first wrong step, ten years ago, without fully realizing whereunto it would lead, and probably with the usual palliative to conscience of a resolve to pay it all back as soon as possible. Either the first small embezzlement led to another, and another, until the first horror of wrongdoing gave place, through the awful power of habit, to facility in dishonesty; or else, he found himself unable to make the restitution intended, and so went on, and on, with the fatal sword of Damocles suspended over his head, dreading discovery ever and constantly.

In the case of the St. Thomas delinquent, it is difficult to make up a true moral profit and loss account, for the reason that we cannot imagine any entry to be placed on the profit side. On the

adverse side, there is a blighted reputation, a wrecked life physically, mentally and morally; a wife and family in despair and humiliation; ten years of torturing apprehension of being found out; ten years of floggings by conscience, and all for what? To be found out, exposed, and wrecked in the end!

Than all this feverish haste to get rich, how much better Edmund Scherer's ideal of happiness, to work, to content oneself with little, to lose without bitterness, to grow old without regret;—"how much better the Simple Life!"

Within a very brief time there have been recorded sudden deaths of prominent men from heart trouble, including Hon. David Mills, Rev. Dr. Dewart, and last week, Mr. C. W. Taylor, business manager of the Toronto Globe. Are deaths of this kind growing more frequent? And if so, what is the reason? Or is it that we notice them more? Mr. Taylor was one of the ablest business newspaper men in the Dominion, a man of impulsively generous disposition, willing to do a good turn wherever possible. He will be missed by many.

Literary Notes.

The Nineteenth Century and After for June is to hand with its usual budget of articles on subjects of present interest. The subject of Imperial Reciprocity is of course, very prominent and is likely to cause lively discussion for some time to come. Three of the articles view Mr. Chamberlain's proposals favorably; while one of them looks upon Mr. Chamberlain as a saviour of his party and the true empire builder. Mr. Gilbert Parker's article will be interesting to Canadians, as he is reckoned one of ourselves. His contribution is indeed interesting, but it does not carry us very far, no farther than its final statement, "The difficulties in the way of reciprocity are great, the obstructions to protection are, I believe, insurmountable." The representative of Liberalism, Sir Wemyss Reid, speaks of the importance of the crisis caused by Mr. Chamberlain's speech. He says: "Those of us who are most firmly convinced that in the interests not only of Great Britain but of the Empire as a whole, our free trade policy ought to be maintained, must admit that a mere appeal to the old formulas and shibboleths will not suffice to secure us the victory in the new struggle to which we have been challenged." Leonard Scott Publication Company, New York.

The Care of the Teeth, by S. A. Hopkins, M. D., D.D.S., Professor of Theory and Practice of Dentistry in Tufts College Dental School. Price 75c. The author of this work is a trained physician and dentist of high standing. The result of his observations through twenty years in the active practice of dentistry is the conclusion that a large prodortion of dental operations might be prevented but that a large proportion of the people do not know how to prevent them. Hence he has given here in simple untechnical language just the advice necessary. The uses of the teeth are discussed; then the causes of decay are clearly pointed out and specific directions are given for the proper use and care of the teeth. Em-

phasis is laid upon proper and continuous care from early childhood. The book is practical and deserves wide circulation. D. Appleton and Co., New York.

Chaucer's Canterbury Tales—The Prologue. Edited with Introduction and Notes by Alfred W. Pollard. Price 2s. 6d. Interest in Chaucer's Prologue never wanes but grows year by year. It has been well edited by Skeat, Morris and Liddell, each of whom contributed valuable information for its elucidation. And now a new edition by Mr. Pollard supplements the work of these editors by much new material which gives effectual aid to a better understanding of the author's meaning. The introduction is an exceedingly good piece of work, containing chapters on the life of Chaucer, his poetry, the framework of the Canterbury Tales, Chaucer's language, his versification, the text of the Tales and Chaucer's Astrology. The annotations are chiefly literary and historical and are especially good in explanation of allusions to English life of the 14th century. The glossary is complete and the illustrations of the pilgrims characteristic. MacMillan and Co., London, England. Copp, Clark Co., Toronto.

DR. G. A. SMITH.

We are sorry to note that the well known scholar and expositor, the Rev. Dr. George Adam Smith has been struck down with typhoid in one of the American cities. Mrs. Smith has arrived to assist in taking care of him and all his plans of work have been cancelled. Dr. Smith had arranged to do considerable work on this side the Atlantic but this sudden illness will put a stop to his activity for some time. There is no man whose work we admire more than that of Dr. Smith and when we consider the amount of it in connection with its quality it is simply astonishing while there are many men, even among the ministers, and professors, who take life a little too easily, some of the best men in all departments are in danger of overworking themselves. The late Hugh Price Hughes was a victim of overwork. Dr. Parker, no doubt, kept on so long because he religiously took his regular holiday. We hope that his successor will follow his example and not attempt more than God intended any man to do. As for Dr. G. A. Smith, we trust that the present attack will not be serious and that after rest he will be strong for further service.

The dead-lock between the French government and the Vatican over clerical appointments continues. Premier Combes holds that so long as the state pays the clergy it must control their appointment. This is conceded by the Concordat. The action of the Church of Rome in this matter, and their breach of the laws dealing with the religious Orders, has aroused the indignation of the people, and now the Premier has announced that he will without delay bring in a Dis-establishment Bill. Quite recently a thousand meetings were held in all parts of France, attended by over half a million people, at which resolutions were passed calling on the Government to separate Church and State.