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LABOUCHERE made a stinging point the other day in the House of Commons when he said that men excluded from the jockey club and ruled off the race-course sat in the House of Lords and interfered with the legislation of the empire. It would not have dulled the point any if he had added that these expelled turfmen also help to make laws for the government of the State Church.

BISMARCK'S retirement illustrates once more that there is nothing the world misses so little as a man. Before the Iron Chancellor had his furniture moved public attention began to fix itself on the young Kaiser posing as a Christian Socialist and to ask what it all meant. Then Bismarck's successor was brought into the foreground and of course statesmen and diplomats had to diagnose him. In a short time the man of blood and iron, who has been the central figure in Europe for years, will be forgotten except in history. Even the Bismarcks are not indispensable to the welfare, much less to the existence of this little world. And yet we hear men every day talk as if the world and the Church would go to pieces if they should stop acting their little parts. 'Tis a huge delusion. What monumental conceit a little man must have when he imagines that he is indispensable to the carrying out of the Almighty's purposes!

DR. WALKER, of Dysart, Scotland, who writes interesting letters for the *Interior* on Presbyterian affairs in the old land, says:

The truth is, however that it is not an easy business to be a professor in these days. It is almost necessary to be under some suspicion of heresy, in order to call forth the confidence of the young men; and a teacher who proposes in biblical criticism to keep by the old lines, must make up his mind to be accused of ignorance and obscurantism.

Young men who require a theological professor to be under some suspicion of heresy before they can trust him, are in danger of proving rather untrustworthy themselves. We should be thankful that in Canada a suspicion of heresy is not a passport to the confidence of theological students, at least not in the Presbyterian Church. Our divinity halls are fairly well filled, and it is a matter of gratitude that there is not a professor in one of the six who secures the confidence of his students by being under a suspicion of heresy. It is possible in this country to keep by the old lines without being accused of ignorance or even obscurantism.

DURING the delivery of his recent great speech in the House of Commons Gladstone brought tears to the eyes of one of the leading legal members and at the close a member of the government, a pronounced Tory, said, "That is the greatest speech we shall hear in our day." The Grand Old Man is the last and the greatest representative of his school of oratory. When he dies there will be no English statesman to pronounce such a eulogy over him as he delivered on the occasion of John Bright's death. The modern parliamentary style, the main characteristic of which is to speak in a business kind of way with both hands in your trouser pockets, loud enough to be heard at a distance of eight or ten feet, does well enough for the discussion of a cow by-law, but it is a failure on great occasions and for great purposes. Gladstone is the last of a school of parliamentary orators that has given lustre to the English name, and when he passes away we shall have nothing but a generation of mere talkers.

DR. TALMAGE explained to a reporter the other day the way in which he keeps healthy, cheerful and good-natured:

In fact, I do not even read unfavourable things that are written concerning me. In this way I keep in good health and spirits, and am always good-natured. Someone connected with my family reads all the papers before they are brought to me, and also opens every letter that comes addressed to me. If they find any unfavourable criticisms of my work, or anything disagreeable in either, they cut them out before they reach me.

As a rule the right way for any man, more particularly a minister, to treat unfavourable things written about him—especially mean, spiteful, malignant things—is never to read them. Cowardly attacks, whether by anonymous correspondents or assailants who hide behind the editorial "we," never did a decent man any permanent injury, while they invariably, sooner or later, injure the person that makes them. When there are so many good books, good magazines, good papers within reach, why should any sane man waste his time and hurt his temper reading the spiteful, malicious attacks his enemies may make upon him? Talmage's plan is no doubt the right one, though we must say that the member of his family who hunts for unfavourable criticisms must have to read some particularly wretched matter.

JUST as everybody was beginning to think that the Revision question was pretty well exhausted, a Philadelphia man comes to the front with the following suggestive remark:

It was scarcely to be supposed that the British had learned everything about the Bible a hundred years after they ceased to say mass, and given allegiance to the Pope; and that their successors, with far better facilities, should learn nothing in two hundred and fifty years.

To say that Protestantism learned all it knows about divine truth during the century after it ceased to say mass and bow before the Pope, and then for two centuries and a half of Protestant light learned nothing more, is to say a terribly severe thing, about Protestantism. Put the point in another way. The first century of Protestantism produced men who framed a symbol that many good men almost worship and put on a level with the Bible. The next two centuries and a half have not produced men fit to be trusted with changing a sentence or two in this time-honoured symbol! If this be so what has Protestantism, what has the Bible been doing for us for two centuries and a half? Is Presbyterianism doing anything for the world if Presbyterians do not know divine truth now as well as they did one century after they used to say mass? This may be a strong argument against Revision, but it seems to prove that Protestant people have not learned anything in two hundred and fifty years of Protestant light. That is hard on the people and not complimentary to the light. The argument, from inability, strikes in directions not always seen by those who say that there are no living men fit to revise the Standards. A Roman Catholic might ask, What has your Protestant light, your boasted liberty and your open Bible been doing for you for two hundred and fifty years if your present teachers cannot be trusted to change a few sentences in your Symbols? Revision can be opposed by much better arguments than lack of ability to revise. Let us not say anything that even by implication seems to belittle our privileges.

MANY of our clerical readers will easily remember the somewhat radical changes that were made in the working of our public school system some years ago. One of the most marked features of the change was the almost total exclusion of the clergy from various positions they had formerly occupied. County Boards had been largely composed of county clergymen but the county Board business was changed. Local superintendents were nearly all clergymen, but that was changed too. Professional teachers must now inspect schools. In some municipalities clergymen were kept off the School Boards just because they were clergymen. The schools of Ontario were about to make an enormous advance as soon as they got into the hands of the laity exclusively. If there is anything in the only new point raised in the exhaustive discussion of school questions the other day the schools have, if we may use the expression, advanced backwards. Mr. Meredith thought that the standard of teaching had fallen rather than risen and asked the Minister of Education to say what he thought about it. The minister candidly admitted there might be something in it and several other members had the same opinion. One honourable member went so far as to suggest that the term required from a teacher at the Normal School should be doubled. One of the cries raised when the changes alluded to were made some

years ago was that young men were using the teaching profession as a "stepping stone" to other professions. That was no doubt true and it may yet be found that the young man who taught on his way to another profession and the young woman who taught until she got a home and husband were quite as efficient as the teachers who never aim at anything but teaching. Scores of the old "stepping stone" teachers may be found in every profession in Ontario and many of them have shown very clearly that they were well worthy of being trusted with a school. The Minister of Education himself was a "stepping stone" teacher and there are several others in the Local House. The Hon. David Mills was, we believe, one, and if you go into law, medicine and the pulpit, you find them by the dozen.

PRESBYTERIAN PARITY.

IN one of the recent issues of the *British Weekly*, which is in the habit of giving condensed reports of sermons by several prominent British preachers, a correspondent suggests that the privilege of reproducing discourses ought not to be confined to a few exceptionally conspicuous men but that sermons by country ministers should occasionally appear. In the same number of our London contemporary there is an interesting paper by one of its ablest contributors, "Claudius Clear," in which he gives several interesting reminiscences of local Scottish preachers, who though they did not bulk very largely in the popular view, nevertheless did excellent work in their day and exerted a strong influence for good in the respective spheres in which they moved. One of the men referred to, and whose recent death occasioned the reminiscences of Claudius Clear, was Dr. Pirie Smith, father of the well-known W. Robertson Smith, whose theological views and profound scholarship brought him into the fierce light of celebrity. The point that these references suggest is that while there is an eager ambition for ministers like other men, to occupy the high places of the field, many men of sterling ability and worth do valuable and lasting service to true religion in the quieter and even more remote fields occupied by a faithful Christian ministry. When the field is the world, there need be no desire to place town and country, city and village, in antagonism. A comprehensive view, and an exalted idea of the work in which Christ's ambassadors engage afford little scope for invidious distinctions. There are, it is true, great differences in fields of labour, and diversities of gifts, and respect must be had to special fitness and qualifications so that in the phraseology of the day there may be proper adjustment to environments. All this, however, gives no countenance for a feeling in the Protestant Church at least that there is a superior and also an inferior clergy.

From inordinate personal ambitions and the desire to grasp peculiar privileges that adventitious circumstances occasionally offer, the abuses and corruptions of churches have originated. Ecclesiastical human nature is not essentially different from the same entity in other fields of endeavour. There are worldly minded as well as spiritually minded ministers just as there are laymen similarly disposed. In the race for the prizes held out by ambition it is not in every case that the worthiest is successful. And judging from the instances above referred to, as well as from ordinary observation it would appear that occasionally there are good men who do not care to enter the race at all. They are content to cultivate to the best of their ability the humble fields assigned them. They seek to be faithful rather than famous, and generally such men have their reward.

Epigrammatic sayings seldom present a truth in its rounded and symmetrical form. At best they are only but half truths. It is their object to present one aspect of truth in a striking manner, and in this, coupled with piquancy of expression, they are usually successful. They are stored away in the popular memory, and taken for granted without question. It is surprising, however, how few of the pithy sayings that have passed into popular axioms will bear examination. Cowper's line "God made the country, but man made the town" has as a quotation enjoyed a lengthy lease of life, but it does not convey an unquestioned truth. At all events ministers no more than others appear to give it unlimited credence. If they did they would certainly prefer the God-made country to the man-made town as the chosen sphere of their beneficent life and work. God works in the city as well as in the country. The cities are the centres of intellectual life, of moral and spiritual energies that are felt far and wide. In the large cities as elsewhere the Devil