

perance point of view, 124 convicts profess total abstinence; 783 to be moderate drinkers; and 475 to be intemperate. In the classification of crimes and offences, those against the person and against property head the list. With respect to divorces 240 has been granted since Confederation, of which six were granted last year. For the same year 10,586 convictions were recorded for drunkenness, of which the Province of Quebec is credited with 3,869 and that of Ontario with 2,465, the average number of inhabitants to each conviction being, for the Province of Quebec, 407; for that of Ontario, 909. The figures indicate a decrease in the number of convictions for this offence throughout Canada.

THANKSGIVING DAY.

THANKSGIVING Day is very far from having attained in Canada the place which it has long held in the United States and especially in New England as a social institution and an occasion for family re-unions. Its place with them is probably due to the early Puritan dislike for the observance of Christmas and the felt necessity for some suitable substitute. Now that even Puritan sentiment has adopted the Christmas festival the chances are that Thanksgiving Day will decline in popularity as a social institution there, and will never at any time attain a corresponding place in Canada. It were much to be desired, however, that it might take a stronger hold on public sentiment than it has hitherto gained.

One thing which has militated against its success has been the irregularity of the date fixed from year to year. In the well-meant endeavor to suit the convenience of all sections of the country and of all classes of the people desiring to observe it, the Government has tried various dates. No one of these has suited everybody and the changes have tended to belittle the institution in public esteem. The matter has not been helped by the adoption of the same day as has long been observed in the United States. Rightly or wrongly that has alienated from it the sympathy of many who have a not unnatural prejudice against any deliberate and avowed copying of their customs. Descendants of U. E. Loyalists may perhaps be excused if a prejudice of this kind weighs with them more than it should.

The chief thing, however, against which the general observance of Thanksgiving Day has had to contend in the past has been the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church. This Church, numerically the largest single denomination in the Dominion, has never paid any attention to the invitation of the Government to observe it as a religious holiday. Its people pursue their usual avocations wherever possible, and no services are held that have any relation to this special subject. This attitude of the church is perhaps influenced to some extent by the unwillingness on the part of its authorities to acknowledge any jurisdiction in such matters on the part of the State. But it finds a more reasonable justification in the large number of religious holidays already prescribed by the church—more, in fact, than a great many find it possible to keep. Their people are naturally unwilling to see the number increased. The only way to secure their hearty consent to the observance of a day for Thanksgiving would be to adopt some day that already has such religious associations in their minds that it would add no additional burden. More than once we have heard suggested the adoption of All Saints' day, the first of November,

and we venture to urge the suggestion as one worth considering.

It is no objection to the adoption of this day that it already has associations in the popular mind of quite a different sort. At first sight it might seem incongruous to connect Thanksgiving with the commemoration of the dead. But as a matter of fact there is no reason why the commemoration of the dead should be altogether a sad and gloomy affair. In fact one of the things for which we ought ever to give thanks is the noble record of the pious souls who have finished their labors and gone to their reward. It is their heroism largely which has made it possible for us to enjoy the bounties of God's providence in peace and quietness. The more hilarious customs of Hallowe'en which are now become a sentiment rather than a superstition could hardly find a more suitable association than with the good cheer of a Thanksgiving day to follow.

THE REV. B. FAY MILLS.

THERE are many in Canada who will remember the evangelistic services conducted by the Rev. B. Fay Mills and the impression he produced, especially in Montreal. Even then grave doubts were expressed in some quarters as to the defective characters of the Gospel he proclaimed. A little over a year ago he formally severed his connection with the evangelical churches and has been conducting services in Boston under the auspices of a committee composed largely of Unitarians. He seems to be rapidly passing even beyond the position of the more conservative representatives of the Unitarian body, if we may judge from a statement of the Boston correspondent of the *Philadelphia Presbyterian* in a recent issue. "Mills," he says, "is fast drifting, and indeed now confesses he was acting hypocritically during his evangelistic career among the evangelical churches, and while he was a Presbyterian pastor. He declared on a recent Sunday night that he had given up the expiatory theory of the atonement and the full inspiration of the Bible when he was twenty-five years old; at thirty he gave up salvation through Christ and substituted salvation by character; at thirty-five he gave up Christ as a deliverer of the individual soul, and looked upon him only as a Saviour of society; and never since his early ministry has he preached on the Bible. If he now gives us a correct statement of his views while he was calling himself a Presbyterian evangelist, we may well be sorry in our hearts at the deep deception which has been practiced upon the evangelical world. But these statements of Mills may be true and may not. I have before me a number of reports of his discourses running back a year, and they show an entire and painful lack of any thing like a system of religious thought or settled fact in anything other than the vagaries of humanitarianism.

A newspaper man told me last Spring that Mills had confessed to him that he hardly knew what he believed. I learned from Unitarian sources that the liberal leaders hardly know what to do with him. He has swung out too far for them. He says he has given up Christ and the Bible and this acts rather as a lode stone."

THANKSGIVING.

"IT is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord." So said the Psalmist in days of old, and it is none the less true now. Certainly we in Canada have abundant reason for so doing at the present time.

The earth has yielded plentifully of her fruits.