

HOWEVER great may seem the absurdity of attempting to found a party with a view to ruling a great nation, on so narrow and impracticable a platform as that of the Prohibition Party, it cannot be denied that with General Fisk as its candidate, and other men of influence amongst its enthusiastic promoters, the Third party is likely to prove a much more influential factor in the present campaign than could have been supposed. As an indication of the earnestness of its friends it is stated that the appeal made a short time since for a fund of \$40,000, to send copies of the *New York Voice* to 60,000 ministers until after the campaign has been completely successful. The entire sum has been raised, mostly in small contributions. It is not unlikely that many good people may be giving their adhesion to the Prohibition Party on principles not very dissimilar to those announced by Dr. Ward, who declares, in a public letter, that he is unable to support the Democrats by reason of their lack of sympathy with the civil service, ballot, and temperance reforms; and that he cannot go with the Republicans because they are working to increase rather than reduce national taxation. This candid friend also scariifies the Prohibitionists for favouring the abolition of the internal revenue tax on whiskey, and then announces his conclusion to support their candidate in the following spicy terms: "The party means well; it is only silly. I would rather be with silly people than with indifferent or ill-disposed people. The Republican party declares that, rather than give up any part of the protective principle, it will give us free whiskey at twenty-five cents a gallon. This is not silliness; it is blindness to moral conditions. I prefer folly to knavery."

LIFE Insurance is becoming year by year a subject of increasing interest. It is no longer a matter of personal concern. It is of public and even national importance. In some countries the insurance of lives is now, and in many other countries in the course of time will be, a governmental duty as imperative as the conveyance of letters or despatching of telegrams. In Canada the insurance laws are fairly equitable and not only native but foreign companies seem to find remunerative business. The oldest and the strongest native Company is the "Canada Life" the 41st annual report of which we publish in another column. From this report nothing but its present position, which is most satisfactory, and its history for twelve months, which is interesting and must be gratifying to those concerned, can be learned; but we happen to know something of the ancient history of this pioneer Canadian Life Insurance Company, and it does not surprise us in the least to find the President saying that its income "exceeds the income of any other Canadian corporation except that of the two great railways which span our Dominion, and that of the leading Canadian Bank." Nearly five millions of new business was done last year, the total income was \$1,695,070.70, the income from investments exceeded the death payments by nearly \$40,000 and the assets now amount to \$8,345,583.42. The only new feature to which the report directs attention is the adoption of a system of Tontine policies which is "likely to be very profitable and advantageous to assurers who attain the tontine periods they may select."

### THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE.—I.

To a considerable number of persons by no means lacking in intelligence the Conference of Anglican bishops "holden at Lambeth Palace in July, 1888," will appear to be a matter of very small importance, if not of actual insignificance. They have heard that an assembly of archbishops, metropolitans, and other bishops, "of the Holy Catholic Church, in full communion with the Church of England, one hundred and forty-five in number, all having superintendence over dioceses or lawfully commissioned to exercise episcopal functions therein, assembled from divers parts of the earth, at Lambeth Palace," and so forth; but they hardly recognized the necessity for giving any special mention or attributing any particular importance to such an event.

To those who consider the real forces by which human society is controlled, the power of religion in every sphere of human life, the deep and wide-spread influence of the English Church, the high character, the varied learning, the copious experience of the ecclesiastics recently assembled, the number of the bishops exceeding that of any assembly of Anglican prelates ever held, it will not seem easy to appreciate the importance of the well-weighed utterances of such an assembly.

It is, of course, clear enough that no final authority can be claimed for the decrees of such a gathering. When "Rome speaks" there are many who declare that "the cause is finished." No such claim can be conceded, by their own communion or by any other, to the English bishops. No such claim is advanced on their behalf. Yet the actual effect of their words need not, for that reason, be less considerable. The utterances

of a self-styled infallibility may not be formally resisted, while they may yet pass wholly unregarded, falling to the ground and bearing no fruit; while the solemn decisions of free men addressed to other men whose freedom is equally recognized, may yet commend themselves to men's consciences and gain an authority derived not from external considerations, but from their own intrinsic truth.

Whether we regard this Assembly of Anglican bishops as representing the communion over which they preside, or consider them as having authority over it—an authority in some sense received from above, and recognized as being so received by the Anglican communion at large,—it is obvious that their decisions are of no slight importance to English Christianity throughout the world. When we speak of English Christianity we mean something larger and more comprehensive than Anglican Christianity. We include the whole of those Christian communities of English-speaking men, which have sprung out of the Anglican Church or have grown up beside or around it, and which, consciously or unconsciously, are, to a great extent, identical in doctrine and sentiment with the English Church and are largely influenced by it.

Dean Stanley once spoke of the English Church as the Themistocles among the Churches, and it is the same now. Each communion would put itself first. Most communions would place the Church of England second. Certainly the English Church, to a large extent, provides the religious literature of the English-speaking communions. The very valuable contributions to the exposition of the Scriptures made by Presbyterian, Congregationalist and Methodist divines, important as they are, bear no proportion to the productions of Anglican scholars and theologians. Moreover—whether for good or for evil, and in part for both—the Anglican Churches embrace the wealthier and more highly educated classes in the community, to whom belong, after all, the chief part in the formation of opinion.

For these and other reasons, and because of the great and eternal importance of the subjects handled by the Anglican Bishops, we purpose to draw attention to their utterances—to what they have said and to what they have left unsaid—to the judgments of the collective assembly, as compared and sometimes contrasted with those of the special committees—from all of which we may learn something, whether we agree or disagree as to the conclusions arrived at.

The pamphlet put forth by the Conference consists of three parts: first, an Encyclical letter, signed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the secretaries on behalf of the Conference, enunciating the subjects considered by the bishops, and giving in the briefest form their conclusions; secondly, the resolutions adopted, either unanimously or by a majority of the whole Conference; and thirdly, the resolutions of the special committees which are to be regarded as the judgments of the Conference at large only when they are embodied in the resolutions.

We can quite understand that many persons will be most struck by the subjects which are "conspicuous by their absence" from the Encyclical of the bishops, and will be ready to quote the old reproach: "*Episcopi in Anglia semper pavidi*." But there are two sides to this statement. There is as much courage often in reticence as in speech. Timidity utters itself in shrieks when courage is patient and silent. And if, in this Encyclical, we miss some subjects which are prominent in the thoughts of many religious people, which we have no present intention of specifying, we can quite understand that the bishops may have thought that some of these subjects would best settle themselves if left to the natural action of public opinion, whilst it is undeniable that they have dealt firmly and boldly with various burning questions which demanded caution and courage for their treatment. We will, first, note, in a general way, the subjects which are successively treated in the Encyclical Letter and in the subjoined reports.

In the first place, the bishops say, they "they desire to speak of the moral and practical questions which have engaged the attention of the Conference; and in the forefront we would place the duty of the Church in the promotion of temperance and purity." We are struck, at once, with the visible influence of modern ways of thought upon the deliberations of the bishops. The practical takes the first place, and the theoretical comes after. It would not be easy to defend this course from the logical point of view; but it will certainly have a good effect upon the untheological and unecclesiastical mind.

Having decided to attack practical questions, it is quite natural that the bishops should deal with the now urgent questions of temperance and purity; and, in connection with the latter, with the "sanctity of marriage," and with polygamy. Leaving the subject of temperance—which has received very full and suggestive treatment from the Conference—for future consideration in our pages, we proceed to make a few remarks on the very