

## THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

\$2.00 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE.

C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Proprietor.  
Office—No. 5 JORDAN ST., TORONTO.

ADVERTISING TERMS.—Under 3 months, 10 cents per line per insertion; 3 months, \$1 per line; 6 months, \$1.50 per line; 1 year, \$3.00. No advertisements charged at less than 6 lines. None other than unobjectionable advertisements taken.



TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 1884.

Now that the Canadian delegates to the Presbyterian Council at Belfast are returning, might it not be well to arrange for a public meeting at a convenient date that they might give an account of the proceedings of that important and influential assemblage. Reports more or less full have appeared, but most of them have been meagre and inadequate. Even a good report is neither so interesting nor inspiring as the living voice of those who have participated in the proceedings. Denominational attachment does not consist in disparaging one's ecclesiastical neighbours, but it is a spurious charity that affects to regard all alike. Such a meeting would stimulate interest in the Church and the work in which it is engaged. It may be taken for granted that a meeting held at a suitable time, and addressed by Principals Cavan and King, Dr. Cochrane and Messrs. Croil and Kirkland could not possibly be uninteresting. The hint is here thrown out gratuitously. We hope it will be taken and acted upon.

THE mild shock of earthquake that a short time ago startled New York, portions of New Jersey and Long Island, happened on a Sabbath. Is it not suggestive? Is the moral significance of earthquakes as obscure as their cause? It occurred in the afternoon, when most of the churches were closed. No doubt had the tremor been felt during the service, there might have been an excitement approaching to panic in some cases. At all events, there would have been no sleepers in church that day. A little earthquake is a good thing if it awakens hearers from their lethargy, and preachers from becoming dispensers of soporific influence. In a coloured camp-meeting where excitement is the normal condition of things, many of the sable worshippers became frantic and fled in dismay. This late harmless convulsion has in materialized minds aroused the uncomfortable suspicion that even this solid earth is not quite as solid as they would like, and is wonderfully suggestive of the time when "the elements shall melt with fervent heat."

THERE are two kinds of missionary boxes. There is the missionary box into which the Sunday-school children drop their contributions for the spread of the Gospel among the heathen, and there is the missionary box into which are packed miscellaneous gifts, chiefly in the shape of clothing for dwellers in distant lands. Against this excellent mode of doing good to others nothing serious can be urged. In fact it affords an opportunity to almost every one of putting something into the box. Far greater use might be made of the mission box than is now the case. In making up such boxes some little judgment is required. The contents should be suitable for the purpose for which they are sent. The natives of distant lands, it is well known, are unaccountable in their tastes, and for this reason it is just possible that dusky dudes might utilize habiliments whose usefulness was seemingly at an end when their donors parted with them. It does seem preposterous to send a shirt front to Central Africa, but a missionary has assured us that a stalwart native not only wore it with pride, but at the same time took forcible possession of a lady's bonnet which he placed jauntily on his head. Articles only that are useful should be sent, and a great many more of them.

THE eccentric ex-professor of Greek in Edinburgh University has in his old days lost none of the courage with which he holds his convictions. Whatever the vagaries in which he has sometimes indulged, he has been unwavering in his admiration for the martyrs and heroes of the Scottish Covenant. In the restored

cathedral of St. Giles a memorial tablet to James Hannah, D.D., for five years dean of that historic cathedral, commemorating the fact that "he was the first and the last who read the Service Book in that Church." This has roused the perversive genius of John Stuart Blackie, who has written a pithy paper to a Scotch magazine on the subject. He proposes placing on the pillar opposite to that bearing the Hannah entablature a similar memento containing the following inscription:

In memory of James Jenny Geddes, or Mean, who, on the 23rd day of July, 1637, in this place, emphatically and triumphantly protested against the usurpation of ecclesiastical functions by the secular power. This memorial is erected by patriotic admirers of the Covenanters, who live in another but not more manly times.

The sight of the Hannah memorial tablet not only roused the patriotic fervour of the genial professor—it also stirred his poetic muse to produce the following:

## TO DAME JENNY GEDDES.

Dean Hannah!—Well, as Shakespeare says, some men have greatness thrust upon them; here you stand in lettered brass all brightly blazoned, when the noble dame with four-legged stool in hand who covered you with borrowed glory, passes unnamed, unnoticed! Let who will commend Cassocks and copes, chants, liturgies and masses, I, with Scotch heart, my stout Scotch knee will bend to none but that brave She, who raised the sign of stout revolt against high-handed rule, And, mailed in proof of people's right divine, Made crown and crozier duck to four-legged stool, That nevermore or priest or prince might dare Down Scotland's throat to thrust a printed prayer.

## FUNERAL REFORM.

AMONG the many meaningless tyrannies of conventionality, lavish and costly funerals are among the most apparent. The absurdity and wickedness of much of the expenditure connected with them is conceded on all sides, and yet such a potent thing is fashion that little or no effort is made to bring about an obvious and much-needed reform.

Well-to-do families have their resources taxed if one of their members has been called away. Retrenchment in expenditure is necessary to make up for the inroads occasioned by the costly demands of a fashionable funeral. What must it be in the case of hard working and respectable mechanics and others who find that rigid economy must be a daily and a constant practice if they are to enjoy the ordinary comforts of life, and to live honestly. To them a lingering illness is a double sorrow. Much might be done if not to save the imperilled life, at all events to alleviate suffering and smooth the passage to the grave, had they the means, but their means are limited and their desires to benefit the sufferer are often unfulfilled. The end comes. Death has done its work, and the saddened home has an additional burden needlessly placed upon it, by the tyrannous dictates of fashion.

Relatives and friends are generally willing to be helpful in the time of trial. It would be shameful were it otherwise. Then comes the lavish display of ghastly funeral decoration, from the costly coffin with its cheap tinsel, the barbaric crape, the conventional mourning attire, and all the artificial display of the trappings of woe possible. The average funeral of the day is at variance with good taste, which in times of deep distress is always simple and unostentatious. It is no evidence of respect for the memory of the dead and esteem for the living to make a funeral procession as nearly as possible a histrionic spectacle. As long as there is a desire for vulgar display, these barbarous funeral customs will continue. In country districts the respectability of the funeral is sometimes estimated by the number of vehicles in the procession.

The religious exercises in connection with funerals are it is to be feared to some extent responsible for the bad taste and expensiveness of existing funeral customs. Of course a faithful minister will avail himself of every opportunity of preaching the gospel. It is fitting that the consolations of religion receive prominence on such occasions. How often are these religious services looked upon as a necessary part of the funeral ceremony, in fact as necessary as the gorgeous hearse in which the remains of the deceased are borne to the grave. Then the temptation to extravagant eulogy of the virtues of the deceased and an unwarranted anticipation of the final judgment is one which some preachers of funeral sermons have considerable difficulty in resisting. The chief reason why so many funerals take place on Sabbath is be-

cause a larger procession can be had on that rather than on any other day.

The principal difficulty in securing reform in our burial customs is in making a beginning. Those in humbler circumstances of life cannot so effectively take the initiative. It requires courage to break the bonds of custom. Working people are not lacking in courage, but their efforts might be misunderstood. It might be imputed to want of proper feeling and respect for the memory of the dead, to have a plain funeral, or it might be attributed to stinginess, imputations people, especially in their circumstances, do not like to incur. Those occupying more prominent social spheres have it in their power to bring about a much-needed reform in the manner of burying the dead. Let a few such have interments conducted with a moderate and decorous simplicity, and many others would be found willing to follow their example. Christian principle and Christian feeling alike countenance the committing of "earth to earth and dust to dust" with becoming reverence and simplicity.

## ONTARIO TEACHERS' CONVENTION.

THE people of Ontario are justly proud of their system of national education. Before its merits and efficiency are what they are to-day, and before obtaining the general recognition they now enjoy, the public schools of Canada evoked popular enthusiasm. They were no doubt frequently spoken of in the language of exaggeration and persons whose faculty of discrimination was by no means acute might have been led to believe that the system as it was thirty years ago had attained perfection. In these days there is happily less sensitiveness to criticism of educational methods. The people are proud of their public schools, but it would be a benefit to the cause of sound education if the people would take a more general interest than is yet the case.

When a school entertainment takes place, or the stated public examination is held, a limited number of the relatives of the pupils and a few aspirants to public office may turn out, but the number of those interested in the real work of the public schools is far too limited. It is well those more deeply interested in the progress of education are not so indifferent. The school teachers of the Province take an active and self-denying interest in their honourable profession. The county associations throughout Ontario are well sustained and are doing much to awaken and sustain public interest in the important work in which they are engaged. The Annual Provincial Convention of teachers is yearly growing in influence and importance. The numerous papers prepared on educational methods, and the free, full and able discussions they evoke, bear conclusive evidence of the zeal with which the teachers are inspired. It speaks well for their enthusiasm in their work that they cheerfully sacrifice a portion of their well-earned holidays that they may meet to consult and devise measures for the more efficient discharge of their every day duties.

The meeting of the Provincial Association in Toronto last week was one of the best yet held. A number of important subjects were submitted for discussion, in which the members took a lively interest. On the subjects discussed there was not in all cases unanimity of view, but the discussion was both independent and thorough, while differences of opinion in no degree impaired the kindly feeling that prevailed from first to last.

The formal routine of procedure was agreeably diversified by various attractions, the first being the conversation, under the auspices of the art class. Important addresses were delivered at successive meetings by Mr. J. L. Hughes, Inspector of Toronto public schools, the Hon. G. W. Ross, Ontario Minister of Education, and Principal Grant of Queen's University. The President of the Association delivered a comprehensive and thoughtful address, many points of which must commend themselves to the friends of education throughout the country. Himself a practical educator, he did not disdain to enter into minute details respecting the purpose and modes of educational work.

Mr. Ross was especially clear and sound on the distinctive work of the common schools. It is becoming all the more obvious that a system of State education must have for its principal object the equipment, as far as possible, for the work of life and the duties of citizenship. Its main work must therefore be principally confined to a thorough training in the elementary branches